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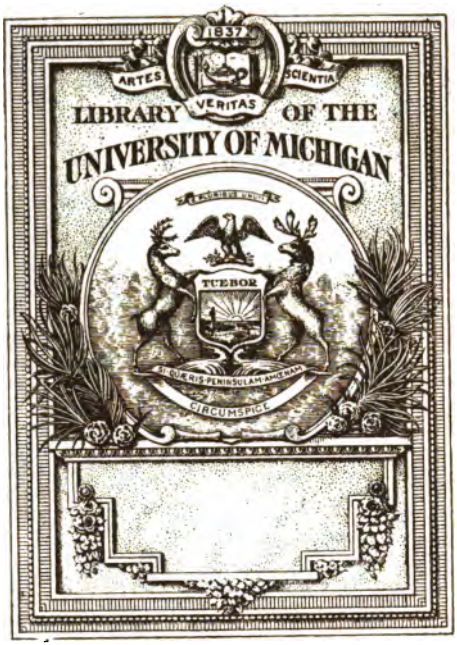
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A VIEW OF THE SITE OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

SELECT NOTES.

A COMMENTARY

ON THE

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS

1902

Studies in the Book of the Acts

AND

Studies in the Old Testament from Moses to Samuel.

EXPLANATIONS OF THE TEXT. LIGHT FROM MANY SOURCES. REFERENCES TO BOOKS AND PICTURES. PUMAN'S SYSTEM OF PARALLEL VERSIONS. PLANS OF THE LESSON. SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING. PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS. SUGGESTIVE ILLUSTRATIONS. REFERENCES. PICTURES. MAPS. CHARTS. DIAGRAMS.

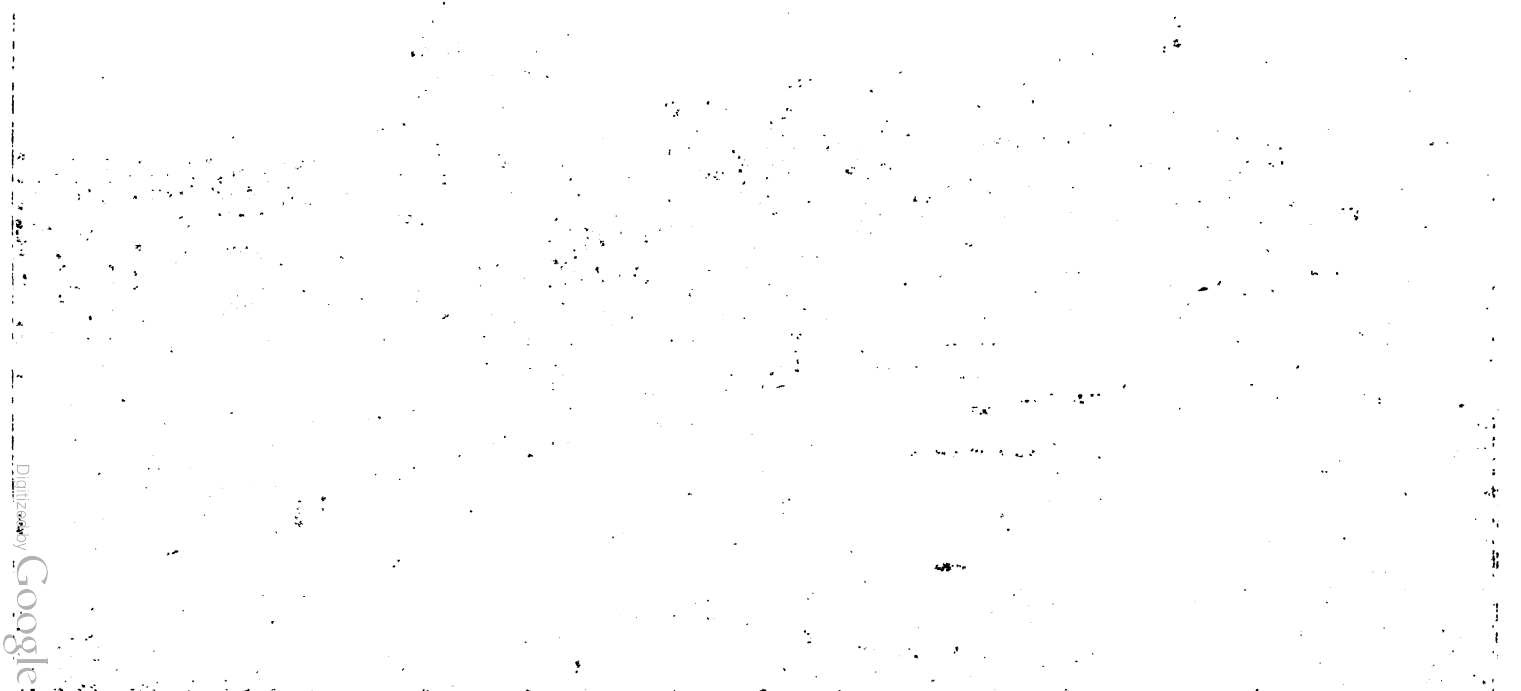
BY

REV. F. N. PELOUBET, D. D.,
AND M. A. PELOUBET.

TWENTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL VOLUME.

BOSTON, MASS., U. S. A.
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For the International Lesson Committee :
REV. JOHN POTTS, D.D., Chairman, Victoria College, Toronto, Can.
REV. A. E. DUNNING, D.D., Secretary, 14 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

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SPECIAL FEATURES AND NOTICES.

NOTE FROM THE LESSON COMMITTEE.

NOTE. In response to requests from editors and publishers, verses are selected for printing when the lesson exceeds a dozen. But the Committee requests that in all cases the entire passage, as indicated, shall be treated as the lesson, whether or not it is printed in full. It is expected that the related and parallel passages named will be considered by writers of Lesson Helps in connection with their treatment of the lesson texts.

For the International Sunday School Lesson Committee: —

Rev. JOHN POTTS, D. D., Chairman, Victoria College, Toronto, Can.

Rev. A. E. DUNNING, D. D., Secretary, 14 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

THE COMBINED TEXT.

The lesson text is taken by permission from Holman's *Linear Parallel Teacher's Bible*, which presents in a single line and in large, clear type the texts of the Authorized and Revised Versions, where said texts are alike. Where they are unlike in any respect, the difference is shown by double lines in smaller type, the upper one being the Authorized Version, and the lower the Revised Version. Thus the variations between the versions are shown at a glance. This most helpful Bible is combined with the usual helps, and is *copyrighted*, and the parallel arrangement must not be copied without special permission.

LESSON SECTIONS.

The general plan suggested by the Lesson Committee has been used in this series of Notes on the Lessons for several years; but still greater emphasis is laid upon it in the present volume. Every effort has been made to trace the development of the history, and impress the chief epochs, or distinct steps of progress in such a way that they will be realized and remembered, and the whole history become one connected whole. Each lesson is shown in its connection with what goes before the event or period that follows.

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

A plan of each lesson is given so as to show at a glance the progress of the thought, its connection and place in the historical development, and to make it easier for the teacher to modify or change the plan to meet his own needs, and accord with his own way of thinking.

CONCENTRATION OF HELPS.

All the helps that can be brought to bear within the possible limits of a book of this kind are concentrated upon each lesson, — the resources of one of the largest private theological libraries, supplemented by frequent inquiries at the libraries of several theological seminaries, and other libraries, with a carefully kept card catalogue of the annual output of books bearing upon the subjects studied. Harmonies, Charts, Pictures, Library References, Lesson Plans, are all made to aid in a full knowledge of the lesson and its adaptation to teaching.

FOR ALL GRADES.

This book is for the teachers of all grades in the Sunday-school, from the student's adult classes to the smallest primary. Its purpose is to furnish the knowledge and the practical applications which must underlie all good teaching, even of the youngest classes. It is the basis of correct interpretation, of knowledge of the facts, of statement of principles, of legitimate inferences, on which the teacher may securely stand and adapt his instruction to the particular grade he is teaching.

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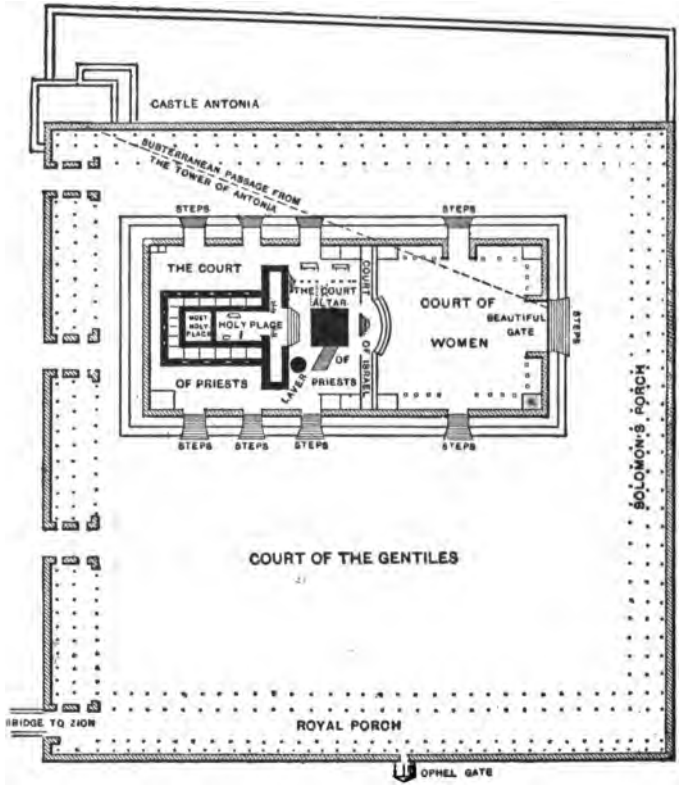
Thanks are due and most cordially given to those who have kindly rendered great and valuable assistance in the preparation of this volume, each in his or her own best way, and to whom no little of the value of this book must be attributed.

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JERUSALEM
In the Time of the Apostles.



PLAN OF THE TEMPLE
In the Time of the Apostles.

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OLD TESTAMENT CHRONOLOGY.

FROM THE EXODUS TO SAMUEL.

NOTE. The exact chronology is very uncertain during this whole period. There is a wide difference of opinion among scholars, and the latest Bible Dictionaries are unwilling to even furnish conjectural dates for most of the events. It seems, therefore, more helpful to the practical study of this period to give the dates in the margins of our Bibles, with the understanding that they are not authoritative, but give the general order and arrangement of events, and are as good as any that can be obtained.

PERSONS.	EVENTS.	DATE B. C.	PLACE.
	FOUNDER OF ISRAELITISH NATION.		
Abraham.	Called of God	1921.	Ur of the Chaldees, emigrated to Palestine.
	FAMILY LINE.		
Isaac. Jacob.	Inherited the promises		Dwelt in Palestine as chiefs of a clan.
	EGYPTIAN EXPERIENCE.		
Joseph and his brethren.	Bondsmen	1706–1491.	Slaves in Egypt—in contact with civilization.
Moses.	Exodus	April, 1491.	Learning to trust and obey God.
	TRAINING IN THE WILDERNESS.		
	Giving of the manna	1491, May.	East of Gulf of Suez, the western branch of Red Sea.
Moses.	The pillar of fire	,, ,,	
	The Ten Commandments given	1491, May.	Sinai, a high mountain in Arabia.
	The golden calf	1491, July.	
Aaron.	The tabernacle set up	1490, March.	
	The ceremonial law given	1490, April, May.	Wilderness of Arabia between the two branches of the Red Sea.
	Nadab and Abihu		
Joshua.	The wanderings in the wilderness	1491–1451.	
	New start for Canaan	1452, April.	Kadesh.
	Waters from the rock	1452, April.	Meribah.
	Death of Aaron	1452, Summer.	Mt. Hor.
Caleb.	The fiery serpents	1452, September.	The Arabah.
	Balaam's blessing	1452, Autumn.	Moab.
	Death of Moses	1451, February.	Mt. Nebo or Pisgah.
	THE CONQUEST.		
Joshua.	Passing over Jordan	1451, April.	At the fords opposite Jericho.
	The fall of Jericho	1451.	
	Defeat at Ai	1451.	Vicinity of Ai.
Caleb.	Reading of the law at Ebal and Gerizim	1451, Early Summer.	Near Shechem.
	The conquest of Canaan	1451–1443.	Throughout Palestine.
	Joshua renewing the covenant	1427.	Shechem.
	The death of Joshua	1427.	Timnath Serah

THE RULE OF THE JUDGES.

JUDGES.	EVENTS.	YEARS.	DATE B. C.	PLACE.
	Rest.	10		Palestine.
	The oppression of Chushan-Rishathaim, from Mesopotamia, during the last years of Joshua.	8	1427	
1	*Othniel*, son-in-law of Caleb. **Rest.**	40	1387	Othniel lived near Hebron.
	Oppression by the Moabites.	18		
2	*Ehud*. **Rest.**			Ehud in the region of Jericho.
3	*Shamgar*, who in these years by irregular acts, like those of Samson, saved the people from the Philistines.	80	1289	Shamgar in the south-west.
	Oppression by Jabin, King of Canaan, with 900 chariots of iron.	20		
4	*Barak*, with Deborah. **Rest.**	40	1229	Kadesh of Naphtali in the north; west of Lake Merom.
	Oppression by Midianites.	7		
5	*Gideon*. Ruth. **Rest.**	40	1182	Moreh in the plain of Jezreel, southern part of Galilee.
6	*Abimelech*.	3		Shechem.
7	*Tola*. **Rest.**	23	1156	Mount Ephraim.
8	*Jair*. **Rest.**	22	1134	Gilead, east of Jordan.
	EAST ISRAEL. Oppression of Amorites.	18	40 years of oppression by the Philistines.	WEST ISRAEL.
9	*Jephthah*. Gilead. **Rest.**	6		12 *Eli*. Shiloh.
10	*Ibzan*. Bethlehem. **Rest.**	7		SO. WEST ISRAEL. 13 *Samson*.
11	*Elon*. Zebulon. **Rest.**	10	1094	14 *Samuel*. Partial **Rest.**

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CHRONOLOGY OF THE ACTS.

Date, A. D.	Acts.	Events.	Place.	Contemporary History.	Recent Schemes of the Chronology of the Acts.					
					Hastings' Bib. Dic.	Ramsay. 1895.	Lightfoot.	Harnack. 1895.	McGiffert. 1897.	Blass. 1895.
30	... .	The crucifixion	Calvary.	Tiberius Cæsar, Emperor Rome, A. D. 14-37.	29	30	30	29, 30	30	29
,,	1: 1-14	The ascension ..... *Commission to the apostles.*	Mt. of Olives.							
,,	2: 1-13	Coming of the Spirit. Pentecost ..... *The power.*	Jerusalem.							
,,	2: 14-47	The early Christian church ..... *Three thousand converts.*	,,							
,,	3: 1-26	The lame man healed ..... *Witness at Jerusalem.*	,,							
,,	4: 1-22	The first persecution ..... *Peter and John imprisoned.*	,,							
,,	4: 23-37	Fresh baptism of the Spirit. *Growth in Christian character.*	,,							
30-34	5: 1-11	Ananias and Sapphira ..... *Five thousand disciples.*	,,							
.....	5: 12-16	Signs and wonders ..... *Great increase in numbers.*	,,							
.....	5: 17-42	Second persecution	,,							
.....	6: 1-7	Difficulty. Settled by appointment of deacons .... *Church organization.*	,,							
35 or 36	6: 8-15	Stephen arrested	,,							
,,	7: 1-60	Martyrdom of Stephen. Address at the trial	,,							
,,	8: 1-4	Great persecution ..... *Thus witness extended through Samaria and Galilee.*	Samaria.	Josephus born in Jerusalem. 36.						
,,	8: 5-24	Philip the Evangelist. Simon Magus	,,							
,,	8: 25-40	The Ethiopian convert ..... *Extended to Africa.*	Road to Gaza.							
,,	9: 1-19	Conversion of Saul of Tarsus	Near Damascus.	Tiberius dies March 37.	35-36	33	34	30	31, 32	30?
36-38	9: 19-25	Saul in Damascus and Arabia ..... Gal. 1: 17, 18.	Arabia.	Caius Caligula, Emperor. 37.						
38	9: 26-29	Paul's first visit to Jerusalem ..... Acts 22: 17-21	Jerusalem.		38	35, 36	37	33	34, 35	33
38-40	9: 30	Paul in Syria and Cilicia. Several years. Gal. 1: 18-24.	Cilicia.							
.....	9: 31	Rest from persecution .... *Growth in numbers and grace.*								
.....	9: 32-43	Peter, Æneas, and Dorcas	Lydda, Joppa.	Death of Caligula. 41. Claudius emperor. 41-54.						
.... . .	10: 1-48	Peter and Cornelius ..... *First Gentile convert.*	Cesarea.	Herod Agrippa made king of all Palestine. 41.						
.....	11: 1-18	Peter called to account ..... *Gentiles welcomed.*	Jerusalem.	Seneca banished. 43.						
42, 43	11: 19-30	Church of Gentiles in Antioch. Paul and Barnabas	Antioch.	Claudius begins the conquest of Britain. 43.						
. .....	12: 1, 2	Persecution by Herod. Martyrdom of James	Jerusalem.							
.. . ...	12: 3-19	Peter in prison. Rescued by an angel	,,							
44	12: 20-23	Death of Herod ..... At the games at	Cesarea.	Herod Agrippa dies April or May, 44.	44	44	44	44	44	44
46	12: 24,25	Paul's second visit to Jerusalem .... *Great increase.*	Jerusalem.	Famine in Judea. 45-47.	46	46	45	(44)		
.....	13: 1-3	First foreign missionaries. Sent from Antioch	Antioch.	Eclipse of sun on Claudius' birthday, Aug. 1, 45, a point whence to calculate all subsequent dates.						
47-49	13: 4	Paul's first missionary journey. Asia Minor.	Asia Minor.							
,,	13: 4-52	Paul in Cyprus, Pisidia, Iconium	,,		47	47	48	45	44, 45	45, 46
,,	14: 1-26	Paul in Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, and return to Antioch	,,	Cumanus procurator.	48					
49	14: 27,28	Paul and Barnabas at Antioch	Antioch.							
50	15: 1-35	The council at Jerusalem ..... *Public acknowledgment of the Gentile churches.*	Jerusalem.	Caractacus of Britain conquered and sent to Rome. 50.	49	50	51	47	45, 46	47
5 -53	15: 36-41	Paul's second missionary journey. Asia Minor	Asia Minor.						46-49	48-50
,,	16: 1-40	Paul enters Europe. Experience at Philippi	Macedonia.		50	51	52	48	46	48

NOTE ON THE CHRONOLOGY. The dates in the left-hand column are very nearly in accord with those of Mr. Turner, in Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, and are near the average of the leading authorities. The dates of a number of authorities are given, to show the variations of opinion, and that we must be "content with what Harnack describes as a relative rather than an absolute chronology." The dates of secular events referred to in the Acts are derived from Tacitus, Josephus, and Eusebius; and these do not agree. But the dates are abundantly accurate for all practical purposes.

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THE BOOK OF ACTS.

I. THE TITLE is not THE ACTS in the Greek, but ACTS OF THE APOSTLES. It relates some acts of some of the apostles, but more especially those of Peter and Paul. It might also be called, in truth, THE ACTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, working through the apostles.

II. THE AUTHOR was Luke, the author of the Gospel according to Luke, the good physician who traveled as the companion of St. Paul on several of his journeys, and remained with him in Rome till the close of his first imprisonment. Zahn says that Dr. Hobart, in his *Medical Language of St. Luke*, "has proved for every one for whom anything can be proved, that the author of the Lukan work (Luke's Gospel, and the Acts) is a Greek physician acquainted with the technical terms of the medical art." He was born, according to Eusebius, at Antioch, educated in Greek literature and medicine; a physician, "reporter, editor, and literary man." Tradition adds that he was also a painter.

III. THE DATE OF WRITING. Not far from A. D. 63, for the narrative breaks off abruptly at the end of Paul's two years' residence at Rome (his first imprisonment). Why is this? Evidently, because there is no more to tell at the time. The writer continues his history up to the date of his writing, and stops there. If he had been writing after the death of Paul, he would certainly have told us of the circumstances of his death. There is no rational explanation of this abrupt ending, except that the book was written about the time when the story closes. This was certainly about A. D. 63. — *Washington Gladden, D. D.*

IV. THE PLACE OF WRITING may have been Rome, according to the common view since Jerome, but it is uncertain.

V. THE LANGUAGE was Greek, "not the literary Greek familiar to classical scholars, but the speech of common life in and about the eastern Mediterranean." — *J. Vernon Bartlett, M. A.* in *The Apostolic Age.*

VI. PUBLICATION. "There was no printing-press, but books were quickly and inexpensively made. Every publisher kept a large number of slaves, who were trained penmen, and to these the work, which was to be published, was dictated. As one read, hundreds wrote, and when the reader had finished there were so many hundreds of copies ready to be put on the market. The book trade throughout the empire was large and important. There were many publishing houses, bookstores, and public libraries in the cities. Books were not so large as books now are, but many volumes were to be had at prices ranging from ten cents to one dollar, according to size and binding." — *Prof. Oliver J. Thatcher.*

VII. THE ACTS AS HISTORY. Professor Moulton, in his *Modern Reader's Bible*, says that while the Acts "has left different impressions on different readers in reference to its unity and arrangement, to me it appears a singularly clear work of history, viewed in the light of the commission given to the apostles by their Master in the opening section," as can be seen in the analysis given below. He makes a statement of his principles, which is equally correct when applied to the best teaching in the ordinary Sunday-school class, — "I have made a point of excluding questions of historic controversy, in the belief that however important in their own sphere, historic discussions, unless in the simplest form, tend to detract from literary presentation."

Canon Farrar, in his *Messages of the Books*, says, "We are happily able to declare without any qualification that St. Luke, in every instance where we can absolutely test his assertions, triumphantly establishes his claim to be regarded as a conscientious and accurate historian." "He can be tested in numerous points of minute allusion," such as the undesigned coincidences between the Acts and the Epistles, such as are referred to in Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, "which now could be greatly enlarged," and yet St. Luke not only agrees with the indications given by the apostle in an immense number of particulars, but can be proved to do so even when there might seem, at first sight, to be obvious contradiction.

"But further than this St. Luke touches on many points of secular history and geography and archæology and biography. We can test him again and again from the most unsuspected sources . . . and in each instance his sketch, incidental as it is, has been confirmed by all that we can learn from non-Christian sources." "His correctness, though challenged, has been absolutely established." — *Farrar.*

"With such independent work as Ramsay and Blass have done, the one going, more or less of a skeptic, to study archæologically the lands of Paul's travels, and coming away

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convinced that the critic and not the book was wrong; the other approaching the textual study of the book as a pure philologian, and coming through this study into a full acceptance of its integrity and its historical worth,— with such results as these, the problem of the book has largely disappeared."—*Professor Jacobus'* in *Problems in New Testament Criticism, 1900.*

VIII. THE SOURCES of the history are naturally Paul himself; Luke's own experience and observation, with such notes as he took from time to time, persons with whom he came in contact, as John Mark, and Barnabas; and any records that may have been made at the time of the events.

IX. THE EXTENT OF THE HISTORY reaches about thirty years, or one generation, as the Gospel history extends over thirty-three years, the previous generation.

X. CHARACTERISTICS. The Acts is the story of the origin and development of the Christian church. It is impossible to understand what power could have produced the effects known to have been accomplished then and continued to this day, which "turned the world upside down and laid the foundations of modern religion and civilization," unless the account in the Acts be true, and back of all, and the source of all were a risen, living, glorified Saviour, and the Holy Spirit of God. As the Gospels record what Jesus *began* to do and teach, so the Acts records what he *continued* to do and teach. This was done through the Holy Spirit, "who," says Dr. Pierson, "is to be to the disciple and to the church all that Christ would have been had he tarried among us, and been the personal companion and counselor of each and all. Whatever appears in the Gospel narratives in the form of precept or teaching reappears in the Acts in the form of practice or example.

SOME RECENT LITERATURE ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

No book of the New Testament has received more attention from critical students during the last few years than has the book of the Acts; and quite a large number of books have been published. The Acts has presented a larger opportunity than any other portion of the New Testament for the application of those methods of the higher criticism which have been applied especially to the earlier books of the Old Testament. Several books are named which are more for those who have time and knowledge for investigation than for the ordinary Sunday-school teacher; and in many of these further and fuller lists of books are given, including not a few in German which have not yet been translated.

Prof. R. J. Knowling's *Acts of the Apostles*, 1900, vol. II. of the *Expositor's Greek Testament* series. It is bound with Romans and First Corinthians ($7.50, Dodd & Mead). The text is Greek. The notes are full. There are many references to the modern literature of the subject. Professor Ramsay places it first of all.

Professor McGiffert's *History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age* is a notable addition to the critical literature of early church history. It denies the Lukan authorship of the Acts, and sees a great number of mistakes and errors in the history, made so chiefly by the learned professor's point of view, and needless logical inferences. At the same time some points are brought out with great vividness, which throw a distinctly clearer light on the history (2d edition, 1900; $2.50, Scribners).

Rev. Frederic Rendall, M. A., Assistant Master of Harrow School, has sent forth *The Acts of the Apostles in Greek and English*. It is divided into two parts: one with the Greek text, and comments; the other with a translation of his own, with comments. "It contains many noteworthy and interesting suggestions" (1897; $2.25, Macmillan).

In the *Ten Epochs of Church History*, the volume on *The Apostolic Age* is by James Vernon Bartlet, M. A., Lecturer in church history in Mansfield College, Oxford. It is a suggestive and helpful volume in "a series of popular monographs" (1899; $2.00, Scribners).

The Footprints of the Apostles as traced by St. Luke in the Acts, by H. M. Luckock, D.D., Dean of Litchfield, had its origin in a series of addresses. It is from the Church of England standpoint, and seeks with due learning and usual accuracy to aid the spiritual and practical life of the people (1897; 2 vols., $3.50, Longmans).

Christianity in the Apostolic Age, by Prof. George T. Purves, Professor in Princeton Theological Seminary, compares well with the other volumes of *The Historical Series for Bible Students* (1900; $1.25, Scribners).

Weizsäcker's *The Apostolic Age in the Christian Church* is able, learned, touching many interesting questions. It is from the standpoint that regards the miraculous birth of Christ and his bodily resurrection as doctrinal developments and not facts, and the Acts in many places unhistorical (1894; 2 vols.).

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Dr. Joseph Knabenbaur's *Commentarius in Actus Apostolorum*, 1899, is from the Romish point of view.

Professor Wendt's Eighth Edition of *Meyer's Kommentar*, 1899, has not yet been translated into English.

Lightfoot's *Dissertations on the Apostolic Age* discusses certain questions in a most scholarly manner (1892; $3.50, Pott & Co.).

Prof. Oliver J. Thatcher's (Chicago) *Sketch of the History of the Apostolic Church* ($1.25, Houghton, Mifflin & Co.) gives a clear, well-written, general, connected view, with distinct outlines of the eras of development of the early church. Prof. J. M. Stifler's (Crozer) *Introduction to the Acts* ($1.25, Revell Co.) is another capital book, with the same general characteristics as the above. Both supply admirable analyses.

Professor Moulton's *St. Luke and St. Paul*, in the *Modern Reader's Bible* series, is capital from the literary standpoint (1898; 50 cts., Macmillan).

Dr. A. T. Pierson's *Acts of the Holy Spirit* (75 cts., Revell Co.) is a very suggestive examination of the work of the Holy Spirit as revealed in the Acts.

H. C. Vedder's *Dawn of Christianity* ($1.00, Baptist Pub. Co.) is written from the Baptist standpoint as one of the Christian Culture courses, to interest and help young people in the study of the early Christian church. It is excellently well adapted to this purpose. Its literature references are especially helpful.

R. E. Speer's *Studies in the Book of Acts* (25 cts., paper; 40 cts., cloth; Int. Committee of Y. M. C. A.) is a condensed aid to the study of the Acts, especially on the author, sources, authenticity, etc.

Geikie's *New Testament Hours*, the 2 vols. on *The Apostles, their Lives and Letters* (1895; $3.00, Pott & Co).

Wm. Arnot's *Church in the House* ($2.00, Nisbet) is popular, suggestive, and spiritual. Homiletic treatment also in Dr. C. J. Vaughan's *The Church of the First Days* (3 vols., $3.00, Macmillan).

HARMONIES. Goodwin's *Harmony of the Life of Paul* ($1.50, Am. Tract Soc.) and Burton's *Records and Letters of the Apostolic Age* ($1.50, Scribners) do for the Acts what the Gospel Harmonies do for the Gospels.

CHRONOLOGY. Lewin's *Fasti Sacri*, or a "Key to the Chronology of the New Testament," gives a view of the chronology of the Acts, together with the best general view of the chief events and rulers, both religious and secular, of each year, and the exact dates of the Passover, Pentecost, and other events so far as possible ($6.00, Longmans). The chronology of the Acts is given with varying views in most of the above books. But the fullest discussion is in *Hastings' Bible Dictionary*, Article "Chronology," by Cuthbert H. Turner of Magdalen College, Oxford.

COMMENTARIES. Marvin R. Vincent's *Word Studies in the New Testament*, vol. I., includes the Acts, and is capital for those who understand the Greek, and useful even to those who do not. Besides the commentaries of Knowling, Rendall, Luckock, Meyer, and Knabenbauer referred to above, among the best are Abbott's, Ellicott's, Cook's, Lightfoot's, McGarvey's, *Cambridge Bible*, *Expositor's Bible*, and many others.

THE LIFE OF ST. PAUL.

Paul, the Man, the Missionary, and the Teacher, by Orello Cone, D.D., connects the man with his environment and the great forces of Christianity (1898; $2.00, Macmillan).

The Life and Letters of Paul, by Lyman Abbott, D.D., traces the evolution of Paul's mind and the development of his religious system (1898; $1.50, Houghton & Mifflin).

THE CHURCH IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE (1892). *St Paul, the Traveler and the Roman Citizen*, by Prof. W. M. Ramsay, D.C.L., LL.D., of Aberdeen (1896; $3.00, Putnam's), throws much new light on St. Paul's travels, and on the Acts in general, and the circumstances of the early church. Conybeare and Howson's *Life and Epistles of St. Paul* (many editions and prices) still stands first in its completeness for ordinary readers.

Professor Jacobus' *A Problem in New Testament Criticism* is a fine exposition of "the teachings of Jesus and Paul."

Paul of Tarsus, by Robert Bird, presents the story of his life in modern picturesque language to make the history attractive to children (1900; $2.00, Scribners).

Stalker's *Life of St. Paul* (60 cts., Am. Tract Soc.) is "a model of condensation," giving a general survey of his whole course, with all the admirable qualities of his well-known *Life of Christ*.

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Lewin's *Life and Epistles of St. Paul* ($8.00, Bell & Sons, London) is a scholarly and exhaustive work, close upon Conybeare and Howson's.

Farrar's *Life and Work of St. Paul* (E. P. Dutton, all prices), and Wm. M. Taylor's *Paul the Missionary* ($1.50, Harpers, New York) are popular, interesting, and instructive.

POEMS. *The Epic of Saul*, by Prof. W. C. Wilkinson ($1.50, Funk & Wagnalls), is a story of the conversion of Paul, embodying the account given in the Acts, but showing the possible steps to this end, and the probable workings and conflicts of his mind. He makes the picture very vivid.

The Epic of Paul, by Prof. W. C. Wilkinson (1897; $2.00, Funk & Wagnalls), is a similar poem on the later portion of Paul's life. It presents a living portrait of the man Paul amid these dramatic scenes.

SECULAR HISTORIANS OF THE APOSTOLIC AGE. Tacitus' *Annals* XV: 4, 4 (born A. D. 54. Annals published about 115). Josephus' *Antiq.* XVIII: 3, 3; 5, 2; XX: 9, 1 (born 37 or 38. Antiquities completed about 93 or 94). Suetonius' *Lives of the Cæsars*, "Nero" (written about 120).

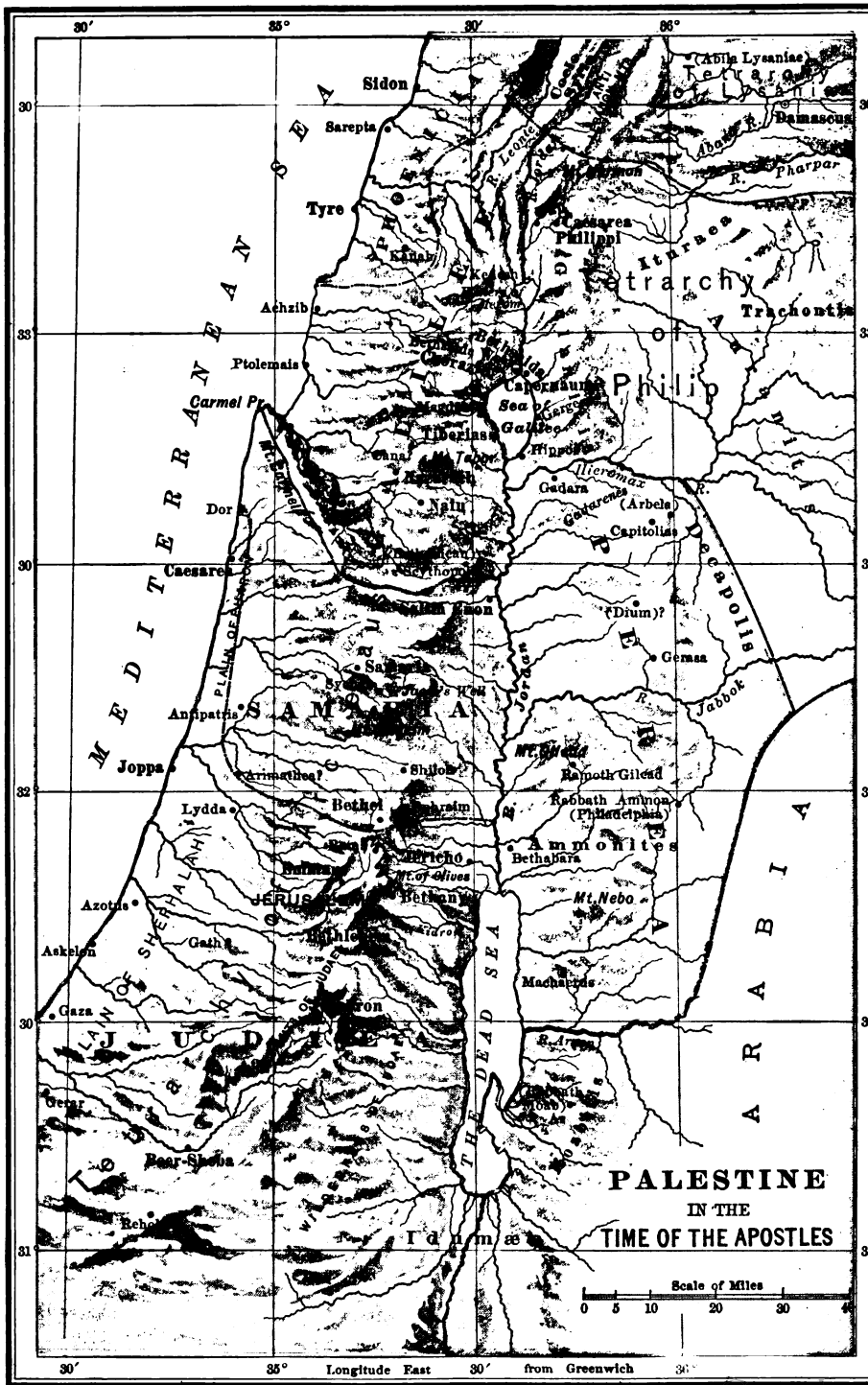
THE REFERENCE LIBRARY. Every school should have a reference library, in an accessible place, always open. It is easy to obtain a few books each year on the lessons for that year. Individuals will often give a book apiece, so that in this way the best books will be accessible to every teacher.

THE TWELVE APOSTLES.

NAME.	SURNAME.	HOME.	BUSINESS.	WRITINGS.	WORK.	DEATH.
SIMON.	Peter / Cephas = *Rock.*	Early life in Bethsaida, afterwards at Capernaum.	Fisherman.	1 Peter, 2 Peter, (Mark?)	A missionary among the Jews as far as Babylon and Rome.	Crucified head downward, at Rome. *Tradition.*
ANDREW.			Fisherman.		Preached in Scythia, Greece, and Asia Minor. *Tradition.*	Crucified on St. Andrew's cross (X). *Tradition.*
JAMES, the elder.	Boanerges, or *Sons of Thunder.*	Bethsaida and afterwards in Jerusalem.	Fisherman.		Preached in Jerusalem and Judea.	Beheaded by Herod, A. D. 44, at Jerusalem.
JOHN, the beloved disciple.			Fisherman.	Gospel. 3 Epistles. Revelation.	Labored among the churches of Asia Minor, especially Ephesus.	Banished to Patmos, A. D. 95. Recalled. Died a natural death. *Tradition.*
JAMES, the less or younger.		Galilee.		(Epistle of James?)	Preached in Palestine and Egypt. (Bishop of Jerusalem?)	Crucified in Egypt, or by another tradition, thrown from a pinnacle. *Tradition.*
JUDE.	Same as Thaddæus and Lebbæus.	Galilee.		Epistle of Jude.	Preached in Assyria and Persia. *Tradition.*	Martyred in Persia. *Tradition.*
PHILIP.		Bethsaida.			Preached in Phrygia.	Died martyr at Hierapolis, in Phrygia. *Tradition.*
BARTHOLOMEW.	Nathanael.	Cana of Galilee.				Flayed to death. *Tradition.*
MATTHEW.	Levi.	Capernaum.	Tax-collector. Publican.	Gospel.		Died a martyr in Ethiopia *Tradition.*
THOMAS.	Didymus.	Galilee.			Claimed by the Syrian Christians as founder of their church; perhaps also in Persia and India.	Martyred. Shot by a shower of arrows while at prayer. *Tradition.*
SIMON.	The Cananæan, or *Zelotes.*	Galilee.				Crucified. *Tradition.*
JUDAS.	Iscariot.	Kerioth of Judea.				Suicide.

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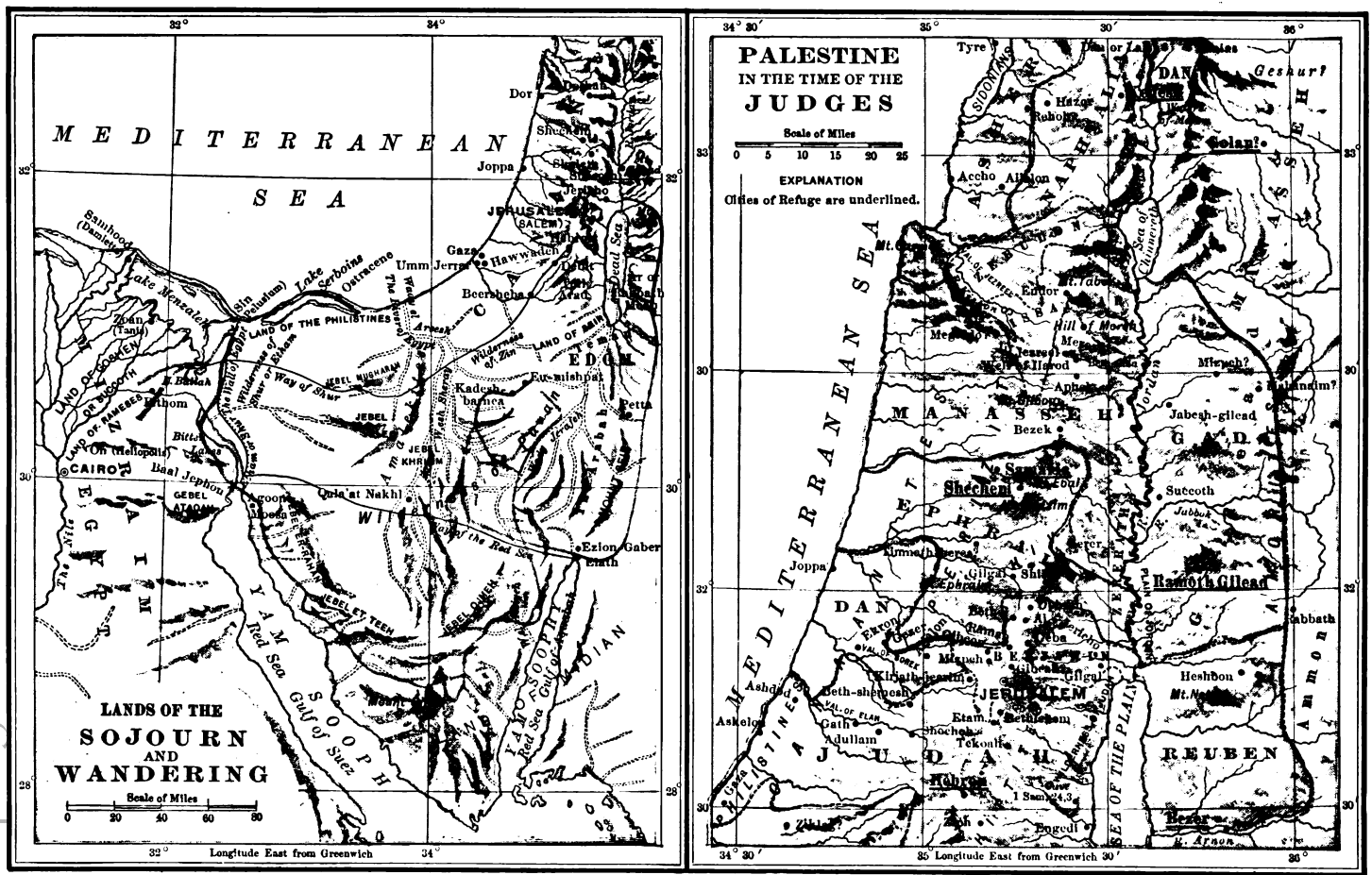
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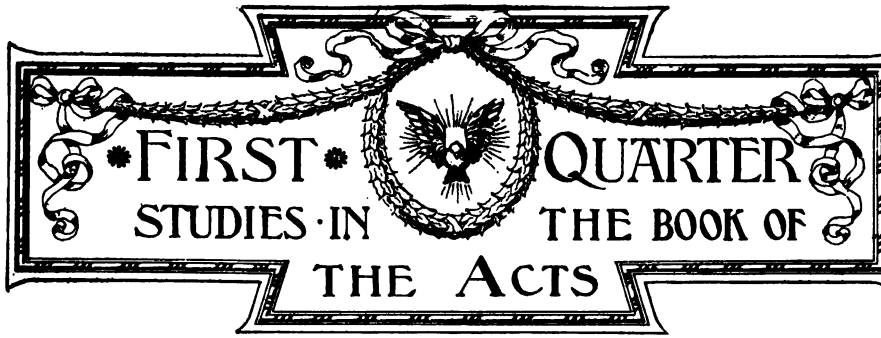


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LANDS OF THE
SOJOURN
AND
WANDERING
Scale of Miles
0 20 40 60 80
MEDITERRANEAN
SEA
EGYPT
YAM SOOPH
Red Sea
Gulf of Suez
Gulf of Aqabah
Dead Sea
CAIRO
Joppa
Gaza
Beersheba
Kadesh-barnea
Ezion Gaber
Elath
Petra
Hebron
Zoan (Tanis)
On (Heliopolis)
Baal Zephon
Pithom
Succoth
Rameses
Lake Menzaleh
Lake Serbonis
Ostracene
Sihon
Arnon
Zered
Jabbok
Jordan
Wilderness of Zin
Wilderness of Shur
Wilderness of Sinai
Wilderness of Paran
Wilderness of Kedemoth
Wilderness of Moab
Way of Shur
Way of Sinai
Way of the Spies
Way of the Red Sea
Land of the Philistines
Land of Goshen
Land of Rameses
Land of Midian
Land of Edom
Land of Moab
Land of the Amorites
Land of Ammon
Land of Bashan
Jebel Hughram
Jebel Khroom
Jebel Et Teeh
Jebel Qurn
Mount Sinai
Mount Hor
Ras Mohammed
Gulf of Akaba
Gulf of Aelanitic
Bitter Lakes
Ghoor
Ain Hudherah
Ain Kadeis
Ain Gudeirat
Ain Weibeh
Ain Jerdeh
Ain Feshkhah
Ain Jidy
Ain Arak
Ain Ghuweir
Ain Hawarah
Ain Ghamr
Ain Ghadian
Ain Ghurundel
Ain Ghudyan
Ain Ghazzeh
Ain Ghoreir
Ain Ghudeirat



FROM JANUARY 5 TO MARCH 30, 1902.

PREVIEW

The first duty of the teacher is to learn something about the book of the Acts, which we are about to study.

For this purpose, before taking up any lesson, one should obtain a general view of the whole book, the course of the history, the object of the author, and the great epochs and movements, so that each lesson may find its natural, logical place in the history of the early church. It would be wise, therefore, to commit to memory the main outlines, at least, as given in the ANALYSIS on page 6.

The lessons for this quarter extend over five or six years, from the resurrection of Jesus to the conversion of Paul, to whom he made his last appearance.

We study the birth and early development of the Christian church. It was the beginning of a marvelous movement, and we look first at the power that produced the effects, and then at the results of the action of that power.

FIRST POWER. The living Saviour, risen from the dead, and ascended to heaven. The King to be loved and served. The Saviour to be proclaimed. The Guide and Director of the movement. The Source of authority and power.

SECOND POWER. The Holy Spirit, the Comforter, convincing of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come; the transformer of souls, the strength in weakness, the guide into all truth.

Without these powers nothing could be accomplished.

THE COMMISSION. To bear witness to Jesus as the Messiah.

FIRST EFFECT. Witness in Jerusalem. Great numbers converted. All these becoming witnesses, by word, by character, by good works, by beautiful and joyful lives, by triumph over selfishness and opposition.

SECOND EFFECT. Witness in Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. The work extended through persecution, which spread the living gospel as the wind that would blow out the fire scatters the sparks and spreads the flames. There is the beginning of organization and triumph over internal troubles and false disciples.

LESSON I. — January 5.

THE PROMISE OF POWER. — Acts 1 : 1-11.

Study Verses 1-14. Read Acts 1 : 1-26.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***While he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.*** — LUKE 24 : 51.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Teaching Methods. — Give the scholars in a few clear points some knowledge of the BOOK OF ACTS as a whole, which they should commit to memory.

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 8, 11; Matt. 28 : 19, 20.

Every scholar should be drilled in some choice, appropriate Scripture verses each Sabbath.

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The Analysis. — Since this lesson presents the great central theme of the book, all of which radiates from it, it would be a great advantage to both teacher and scholar to learn by heart the leading epochs of the history, as given in the "Analysis" on page 6, and in the "Preview," and to put this lesson, as well as each succeeding one, in its logical place in the history.

THE SECTION.

In teaching, use the whole section included in the lesson, — Acts 1: 1–26, and the other records of the last commission and the ascension: Matt. 28: 19, 20; Mark 16:19; Luke 24: 44–53.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON.

Time. Spring of A. D. 30. The forty resurrection days, from April 9 to May 18; and the ten days of waiting, May 18–28.

Place. The ascension was from the Mount of Olives, in the outskirts of Bethany. The prayer-meeting was in an upper room of some well-known house in Jerusalem.

Place in the History. The connecting link between the seen and the unseen life of Jesus, the Messiah. The development of the kingdom of God committed to the disciples, under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

The *Commentaries* and books on *The Apostolic Age*, referred to on pp. 7, 8; Rev. Dr. A. T. Pierson's *Acts of the Holy Spirit* ($1.25, Revell); C. R. Morison's *Proofs of the Resurrection from a Lawyer's Standpoint;* Dr. Kennedy's *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ, a Historical Fact; From Calvary to Pentecost*, by F. B. Meyer (Revell); Boardman's *Epiphanies of the Risen Lord.* Professor Stokes, in the *Expositor's Bible* on the Acts, is very wise and helpful. *The New Acts of the Apostles*, by A. T. Pierson (Baker & Taylor); Max Müller on *Missions* (Scribner & Armstrong); Bishop Simpson's *Sermons*, p. 175, "The Great Commission" (Harpers); Stevenson's *Praying and Working;* Fish's *Primitive Piety Revived* (Pilgrim Press).

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

These can be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

1. The book of the Acts.
2. The plan of the book.
3. The bearing of the resurrection of Jesus upon the founding of the church.
4. The promise of the Father.
5. The great commission.
6. The promised return.

LESSON OUTLINE.

Introduction. The book of the Acts.

SUBJECT: The Commission to bear Witness to Jesus as the Messiah and Saviour.

I. JESUS LIVING. THE EVER-LIVING MESSIAH (vs. 1–3).

Infallible proofs, a basis of belief in him.

II. THE PROMISE OF POWER (vs. 4–8).

To enable them to accept and fulfil the commission.

III. THE GREAT COMMISSION (v. 8).

To bear witness to Jesus, the Messiah:
First. In Jerusalem, to the Jews.
Second. To Judæa and Samaria.
Third. To all the world.

IV. THE ASCENDED LORD (v. 9).

Connecting the earthly life with the heavenly life of Jesus.
Enabling the disciples to realize that they have a living Saviour.

V. THE PROMISE OF RETURN (vs. 10, 11).

His perpetual presence.
His continued working.
The assurance of success.

VI. WAITING FOR THE PROMISE (vs. 12–14).

In prayer and in hope with spiritual preparation.

PICTURES.

The Ascension, Hofmann, Rembrandt, Tintoretto (Venice), La Farge (in the Church of the Ascension in New York City); Tissot's *Life of our Lord*, two pictures of the ascension.

The following pictures in half-tone may be obtained of W. A. Wilde Company: *The Church of the Ascension* on the Mount of Olives; pictures of *The Ascension* by Tintoretto, Hofmann, Rembrandt, and Raphael Mengs.

1. The former treatise [have] I made, O [1] Thĕŏph'ĭlŭs, [of, concerning] all that Jesus began both to do and [to] teach,

[1] Luke 1: 3.

I. **Jesus raised from the Dead. Hence the Ever-living Messiah Saviour.** — Vs. 1–3. 1. **The former treatise,** or history, — the Gospel according to Luke, — "deals

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2. [1] Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandment [2] had given commandments through the Holy Ghost unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

3. [3] To whom also he he also shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to concerning the kingdom of God:

[1] V. 9 Mark 16: 19; Luke 9: 51. [2] Matt. 28: 19; Mark 16: 15; John 20: 21; Acts 10: 41, 42. [3] Mark 16: 14; Luke 24: 36; John 20: 19.

with the ascension as the close of the earthly life of Jesus; it is there the final sequel of the resurrection"; but in the Acts "the ascension is contemplated as the opening of the heavenly life" (Rendall), as the beginning of the founding and development of Christ's church, the visible kingdom of heaven. **O Theophilus.** A proper name, not uncommon among the Greeks and the Jews. In the Gospel Luke calls him "most excellent" (*Krátiste*), a title which was "peculiarly appropriated to Romans holding high office, and actually became, during the second century, a technical title to denote equestrian rank." — *Professor Knowling.* The title is applied in the Acts to Felix (23: 26), and to Festus (26: 25). It refers to the patrician order of knights.

It has been suggested that the omission of the title here "denotes that St. Luke's friendship had become less ceremonious, just as a similar change has been noted in the dedication of Shakespeare's two poems to the Earl of Southampton." — *Knowling.* The title "right honorable" is left off from the second dedication, as "most excellent" is left off by Luke in the Acts. **All that Jesus began both to do and teach.** Either what Jesus did from the beginning, or, implying "that the former treatise related what Jesus *began* to do and to teach; and this relates what he, the same Jesus, *continued* to do and to teach." — *Alford.* Everything that Jesus did or taught was but a beginning, a seed from which far greater things were to grow, as he himself taught (John 14: 12; 13: 7; 14: 26). "The book is the second part of the Acts of Jesus." "The fact is both curious and significant that what is found in the Gospel Narratives, in the form of precept or teaching, reappears in the Acts of the Apostles in the form of practise or example." — *A. T. Pierson.* "No doubt there is a sense in which, with every Christian for nineteen centuries, St. Luke would regard *the whole* earthly life of Jesus as *a beginning*, a prelude to the glory and mighty working to be revealed and perfected in the ascended Lord." — *Knowling. To do and teach.* "The gospel story is a book of mighty deeds as well as of wondrous speech." — *Professor Stifler.* And the Acts continues both. "He did first, then he taught; he first taught by example, and then by word. He did not teach what he had not first himself done." — *Cornelius à Lapide.*

2. Until the day. Luke closes his Gospel with the account of the ascension. **Taken up** to heaven. **Through the Holy Ghost.** Showing that the commission was from a divine source, and guided by the Holy Spirit. **Had given commandments unto the apostles.** At various times during his life and the forty days of his resurrection life, but especially at his last appearance.

3. To whom also he shewed himself. Not merely "appeared," but showed himself, made himself appear. **Alive.** The same Jesus who was crucified, and with the same body as before his crucifixion, that bore the wounds of the cross, had flesh and bones, and ate as in former days. The great change of his body into a spiritual body (1 Cor. 15: 51–54) seems to have occurred at the ascension. **After his passion.** "Too sacred a word to be expunged from this the only place where it occurs in the Bible." — *Humphry.* **By many infallible proofs.** *Infallible proofs* is one word in the original, and signifies *proofs by sure signs.* R. V. simply "proofs," the technical use of the Greek word, "convincing certain :vidence." — *Knowling.* "The Greek word signifies some sign or token manifest to the senses, as opposed to evidence given by witnesses." — *Cambridge Bible.* But the single Greek word, translated *infallible proofs*, is used frequently by Plato and Aristotle, and denotes "the strongest proofs of which a subject is capable," "an irresistible proof." — *Schaff.* "Used by Aristotle (*Rhet.* i., 2) for proofs that carried certainty of conviction with them, as contrasted with those that were only probable or circumstantial." — *Ellicott.* "The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the best attested fact in history." — *Lyman Abbott.* **Forty days** at intervals, ten or eleven times. **Speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God,** which was to be unfolded and carried on through them. During all this transition period the disciples were being trained to understand and to do the work that was before them. There was much that it was impossible for them to understand before.

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4. [1] And [and] [a] being assembled together with [them, commanded them, he charged] them [that they should] not [to] depart from Jĕ-rū'sā-lĕm, but [to] wait for the promise of the Father, [2] which, [saith said] *he*, ye [have] heard [of from] me:

[1] Luke 24: 43. *a* Or, *eating with them.* [2] Luke 24: 49; John 14: 16; Acts 2: 33.

RELATION TO THE SUCCEEDING HISTORY. 1. The fact that Jesus was alive after his crucifixion was essential to the certainty that Jesus was the promised Messiah, proclaimed in the Old Testament as an everlasting king, whose reign should never end, the Saviour and Redeemer of men. All the hope and faith of the apostles was built upon this fact.

2. It was impossible to build up a kingdom with a dead king, a mere memory, as its ruler. Behind the apostles must be the living Teacher and Master and King; the one they had known and loved and trusted. They must present a living Saviour, a present help, one who could be loved and served, one who could be everywhere present, with all power to help, or why should the people believe on him? The first thing in the new kingdom was THE KING.

II. **The Promise of Power.** — Vs. 4-8. The next essential after THE KING was a POWER by which the kingdom could be established, gain adherents, transform sinful men into holy citizens of the kingdom, overcome all obstacles, and change the whole world into a kingdom of God such as is pictured in the last chapters of the Bible. The work was one of inconceivable magnitude and difficulty. A few unlearned men, without rank, or learning, or wealth, or territory, or army, were to conquer the world; conquer lust, passion, prejudices, selfishness, customs, fashions, wrought into the very texture of society; conquer the victorious Roman empire that itself had subdued the world. It was the height of absurdity, of impossibility, except by divine power working through these few disciples.

4. **And, being assembled together with them,** the twelve (pointing back to Luke 24: 49). They assembled probably in Jerusalem on the day of ascension, whence Jesus led them out toward Bethany (Luke 24: 50). **Commanded them.** Emphatic, "charged them." **Should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait.** They waited by prayer, by conference together, by doing necessary duties (vs. 13, 14, and rest of the chapter). Waiting is not sleeping with folded hands. "Tarry at the promise till God meets you there." — *D. L. Moody.* They waited ten days. **For the promise of the Father.** The Greek ἐπαγγελίαν, *promise*, invariably in the New Testament, signified "a free promise, given without solicitation." For the fulfilment of the promise which the Father had given. It was *the* promise, as being the greatest, most important, all-embracing promise, — the Holy Spirit promised by Joel (2: 28, 29; see Acts 2: 17, 18); by Isaiah (44: 3). It was really the sum and substance of all the promises of the coming of the kingdom of God, and the redeemed world to Abraham, to David, and through the prophets, especially Isaiah. For the new dispensation was to be the dispensation of the Spirit, by whose power the transformation and triumph were to come. **Which . . . ye have heard of me.** This promise is alluded to in Luke 24: 49, and found in John 14: 16, 26; 15: 26. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever."



From a Photograph by Wilson.

"Upper Room."
Over the Reputed Tomb of David.

THE REASONS WHY THEY MUST WAIT. 1. Because it was fitting that the new law, as the old, should go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isa. 2: 3; Mic. 4: 2).

2. "The apostles' testimony should be

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5. [1] For [for] John [truly indeed] baptized with water; [2] but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

6. [When they therefore / They therefore, when they] were come together, [they] asked [of] him, saying, [3] Lord, [wilt / dost] thou at this time [4] restore [again] the kingdom to Is'ra-el?

7. And he said unto them, [5] It is not for you to know [the] times or [the] seasons, which the Father hath [put in set within] his own [power. authority.]

[1] Matt. 3: 11; Acts 11: 16.
[2] Joel 3: 18; Acts 2: 4.
[3] Matt. 24: 3.
[4] Isa. 1: 26.
[5] Matt. 24: 36; Mark 13: 32.

delivered not to men unacquainted with the facts, but to the inhabitants of the city where Jesus had been crucified and buried." — *Knowling*. Thus the well-known facts could best be used for convincing and saving men.

3. That the great gift might come upon all at once and alike, so that all could preach the gospel from one experience, and with one power, and all testify to the great event. The effect on the community would also be far more powerful. The effect was massed.

4. So that the coming of the Spirit might be at the next great festival after the crucifixion, when strangers from all parts of the world would be gathered at Jerusalem, who would carry back the tidings into all lands.

5. Till then, they themselves would not be prepared to preach the gospel. They needed more training, they needed to be equipped by the Spirit for service. They needed time for all these teachings and strange events to gradually crystallize in their thoughts, and for their souls to be consecrated anew, and open to receive the influences of the Spirit.

6. The people needed something of the same process of gradual preparation. To have begun too soon to preach would have been like sowing seed on frozen ground.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTION. There are times when it is our duty to wait; not in idleness, not in sleep, but in prayer, in removing all hindrances from our hearts, in doing every duty close at hand. No time is lost in sharpening the scythe; the prelude on the grindstone makes a quicker harvesting. Tuning the instruments is the way to the best music.

5. **For John** the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, **truly baptized with water,** the symbol and type of a higher and better baptism. Many were brought to repentance then. But something far mightier, higher, better, was needed. While John was baptizing with water, he pointed to Jesus as the one who should baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire (Matt. 3: 11). Jesus says that this promise is about to be fulfilled. **Ye shall be baptized with** (or in) **the Holy Ghost.** As the element in which the baptism is performed. — *Professor Hackett.* Not that this would be the first time that the Holy Spirit had been received, but that the influence would come with peculiar manifestations, in great abundance, and upon all disciples. **Not many days hence.** About ten days, on Pentecost. "Not *many* days, that they may hope, but he does not say *how* few, in order that they may watch." — *Chrysostom.*

6. **When they therefore were come together** on the Mount of Olives (v. 12), referring either to the assembly mentioned in v. 4, or to the gathering again at the place of the ascension after they had walked thither from Jerusalem. **They asked.** Kept asking, "the imperfect denoting a repetition of the question." — *M. R. Vincent.* **Lord, wilt thou** (R. V. "dost thou") **at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?** As promised again and again in the Scriptures. Israel was then subject to the Roman power. They probably imagined that the world would be converted to Judaism, and that Jerusalem, the holy city, would be the resort of all nations, the center of light and power and religion for the world. They probably had no conception, and could not have, of any other way in which the hopes of the Jews and the promises of the Bible could be accomplished.

LIGHT FROM HISTORY. In 1773 there was discovered in Abyssinia a book called the *Book of Enoch*, which was written in the first and second centuries before Christ. It expresses the inner mind of the Jewish people at the time of Christ. The people were daily expecting the establishment of the Messianic kingdom, not a spiritual kingdom, but a scene of material glory, where "the Jews would be exalted above all surrounding nations, and the hated invader expelled." "This eager expectation," says Professor Stokes, "dominated every other feeling in the Jewish mind, and was burned into the very secrets of their existence by the tyranny of the Roman rule."

7. **And he said,** implying that their general expectation of some kind of restoration **was correct. It is not for you to know the times or the seasons.** Omit *the*. It is not

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8. [1] But ye shall receive power, [2] after that when the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and [3] ye shall be my witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

[1] Acts 2: 1, 4. [2] Luke 24: 49. [3] V. 22; Luke 24: 48; John 15: 27; Acts 2: 32.

for you to know *times*, the duration of future periods of church history, *or seasons*, critical periods, occasions of special importance, the marked epochs in the development of the kingdom of God. **Which the Father hath put** (or placed) **in his own power** (or authority). Kept within his own absolute disposal; the dates of which he will make known when he sees fit.

WHY THE FUTURE WAS HIDDEN FROM THE APOSTLES. 1. It was impossible for them to see the future events as they really occurred. Their ideas, their point of view, their expectations, and the circumstances connected with the times and seasons would all have to be changed before it would be possible for any one to understand them. For instance, the knowledge of the fall of Jerusalem and of the Mosaic ritual would have staggered their faith. They had too many prejudices, they had too narrow a view, to yet understand the method in which it could be restored, and how the new could be grafted on the old. It would be but pictures to the blind and music to the deaf. No one can "read the book till God unrolls it" in history.

They could not tell *the times* any more than one by observation can tell when winter really ends and summer begins; or the exact moment when the sun rises on a cloudy day.

Examples.

Again we find two lines of prophecy in relation to the second coming, in one of which it is depicted as near, while the other points to a dim and distant future. They are not contradictory, but only two views of the same thing, which began very soon, with different eras, and is to be consummated at the end of the world. So that all the practical power of an imminent coming, and of a great transcendent event to be labored for and hoped for, is brought to bear upon the disciples of Christ.

2. It would have been of no use to them if they had known. It would have taken their thoughts away from their work, and interested them in useless questions. This is justified by the apostolic experience as shown in the second epistle to the Thessalonians. The false views of the immediate expectation of the second coming of Christ led to idleness, disorder, and scandals. Professor Stokes, in the *Expositor's Bible*, pp. 38–40, gives two instances from church history, one of some monks in an Egyptian monastery in the fifth century, and another in London in the tenth century, when business was suspended in that city on a certain day because it was expected that the Lord on that day would appear in judgment.

> "Oh, blindness to the Future! kindly given,
> That each may fill the circle marked by heaven." — *Pope.*

3. Those to whom they preached would have still greater misunderstandings, and useless opposition would have been aroused. Indeed, it would have been almost impossible to have carried on the work under such circumstances. Every ray of sunrise would have seemed like the flame of the burning world.

4. All they needed was the fact, as a certainty, toward which God would gradually lead them, and the power to accomplish the desired results.

> "I know not the way I am going,
> But well do I know my Guide."

8. **But** instead of this useless knowledge **ye shall receive power** to accomplish the things you desire to know, to make the Ideal, the Real. You cannot *know* the future, but you can *make* it. *Power* in the Greek is δύναμιν (*dunamin*), of which our word "dynamite" is almost a transliteration, and this expresses well the greatness of the power to upheave the obstacles in their way, although the power bestowed was in its action more like that of the sun, which is infinitely greater than all the explosives in the world.

This power given includes (1) moral and spiritual power; (2) power to overcome temptations, and to do right under the most trying circumstances; (3) power to lead men to the Saviour; (4) power to overcome all enemies and obstacles, though they were like mountains to be cast into the sea; (5) power to work miracles; (6) power to lead the church; (7) power to bring the kingdom of heaven. The power comes from **the Holy Ghost.** *Ghost* is Old English for "Spirit."

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ILLUSTRATION. Mountains of ice, mountains of cloud, easily removed by the shining of the sun, though impossible to human energy. One may as well try to remove the snow from our fields, or the ice from our lakes, with shovels and carts, without the aid of the shining of the sun in spring, as to take away sin from the human heart, and cause the plants of righteousness to flourish therein, without the presence of the Holy Spirit.

APPLICATIONS to mountains of difficulty, to reforms, to the conversion of the world, to missions, to mountains of trial, to hindrances in our work.

III. **The Great Commission.** — V. 8. Having an ever-living KING, and the promise of the necessary POWER, the next step was an authoritative COMMISSION, a work committed to them by divine authority. That work was to BE WITNESSES THAT JESUS WAS THE MESSIAH, the expected Saviour and Deliverer.

Ye shall be witnesses unto me. The words, which are apparently identical with those of Luke 24: 48, strike the keynote of the whole book, which is the history of the way and the places in which the commission was carried out. *Witnesses.* Greek, μάρτυρες (*martures*), from which our word "martyrs," *i. e.*, those who bear witness to Jesus Christ by suffering and dying for him. The gospel is built upon facts, not theories. The Gospels are the summary of the witness of the apostles. They were written many years after the apostles began to preach, and are the story that had been told many hundreds of times by these witnesses. And still the power of preaching and of teaching is not in arguing, but in witnessing, in declaring the truths known and tested by experience. *Witnesses unto me.* Unto Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ, foretold in the Old Testament, that he was to bring in all those glorious visions and descriptions which the prophets had declared would come to pass, only in a different way from the expectations of many of the people, that he was the deliverer of the people from their sins, that he was the messenger from God bringing the good news of his love and care and fatherhood.

The places named express the order in which the witness should be borne, and corresponds to the great divisions of the book.

FIRST. **In Jerusalem**, where the facts of his death and resurrection were best known; the central point of the former dispensation, on which the new was to be grafted (Acts 1–7).

SECOND. **And in all Judæa, and in Samaria**, when the disciples were driven from Jerusalem by persecution (Acts 8–12).

THIRD. **Unto the uttermost part of the earth.** "By *uttermost* both time and space are included; to the remotest corners of the earth, to the remotest period of time." — *Abbott.* Paul himself carried the witness of the gospel to Rome, and "in the *Psalms of Solomon* we read of Pompey that he came from *the uttermost part of the earth, i. e.*, Rome; the same phrase as in Acts 1: 8." — *Knowling.*

PRACTICAL. 1. All Christians are to be witnesses, testifying to the reality of religion, to fulfilment of the promises, to the living presence of Jesus, to his power to save from sin, to guide into righteousness and support in trouble; to the superiority of Christianity to all other religions, by what it does for them more than other religions can do for their votaries. Just in proportion as the Christian has experienced what Christ can do, and his nature and his life have been transformed, can he do effective work as a Christian.

2. He bears witness (1) by his words, for there is much which can be made known only by his expressing what Christ has done within him.



From a Photograph by Wilson

Church of the Ascension (on the Mount of Olives).

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9. [1] And when he had spoken said these things, while as they beheld, were looking, [2] he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

[1] Luke 24: 51; John 6: 62. [2] V 2.



From a Photograph by Wilson.

Dome of the Church of Ascension.
Mount of Olives.

(2) By his life and character, showing a well-known specimen of what Christ does for a man. His family life, his religion at home, the way he does his business, his conduct in public affairs and social life, are all witnesses as to what Christ has done for him, and can therefore do for others. (3) By sending witnesses to the uttermost parts of the earth.

IV. **The Ascended Lord.** — V. 9. We next come to the connecting link between the earthly and the heavenly life of Jesus. THE SAME JESUS WHO LIVED AND TAUGHT ON EARTH NOW RULES IN GLORY AND POWER IN HEAVEN OVER HIS EARTHLY KINGDOM.

9. While they beheld. That they might have clear proof of his ascension, to assure them that there was no deception. He was in the act of blessing them when he was taken up (Luke 24: 51). **A cloud received him out of their sight.** (Compare Matt. 17: 5; Luke 9: 34.) Perhaps it was like the "fiery, cloudy pillar," the symbols of God that led the Israelites through the wilderness, or Elijah's storm chariot, or the bright cloud of glory which overshadowed him on the Mount of Transfiguration. It was at this time, doubtless, that the great change came over his body described in 1 Cor. 15: 51–53. For such a change is signified by his appearance as John saw him (Rev. 1: 12–16).

PLACE OF THE ASCENSION IN THE REDEMPTION OF THE WORLD. 1. It showed the continued reality of Christ's existence, linking this world with the other, and showing how he could be the ever-living Saviour in heaven, whom Stephen saw at the right hand of God, who came to Paul on the way to Damascus, who is ever with his people, even to the end of the world. The last view of Christ is not upon the cross, but ascending from Olivet into glory; not in agony of atonement, but in the act of blessing; not in seeming defeat, but in manifest triumph. We worship not a dead, but a living Saviour, to whom we shall go, with whom we shall be in glory, and whom we shall love and serve through endless ages.

2. We are enabled to realize his glorious nature, as revealed on the Mount of Transfiguration, to John in Rev. 1: 12–16, to Stephen, and to Paul.

3. The ascension was a fitting close of Jesus' earthly mission, a return to his Father, corresponding to his coming from the Father when "he was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth." It completed the proof of his divine nature and mission, and crowned his life with success.

4. His bodily presence could be only in some one place, toward which all men would tend. "A present bodily Jesus involves a geographical church." Now abiding on the right hand of God, he is enabled to be the omnipresent Saviour of all men, as would not be possible if he were in the body, though as king in Jerusalem. His Holy Spirit is everything to all men everywhere that he himself would be if present with each one to aid, to comfort, and to guide.

5. Only by his going away could the Holy Spirit come and take his place. With him in bodily presence in any one place, the attention of his people would be called away from the spiritual and universal nature of his church, to that which was outward and temporal and earthly. The work of the Holy Spirit would be hindered and hampered. Statecraft,

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10. And while they looked (were looking) stedfastly, toward (into) heaven as he went, up, behold, two men stood by them [1] in white apparel;

11. Which (which) also said, [2] Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up (looking) into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken (was received) up from you into heaven, [3] shall so come in like manner as ye have seen (beheld) him go (going) into heaven.

[1] Matt. 28: 3; Mark 16: 5; Luke 24: 4; John 20: 12; Acts 10: 3, 30.
[2] Acts 2: 7.
[3] Matt. 24: 30; Mark 13: 26; Luke 21: 27; John 14: 3.

politics, government by force, would naturally arise, turning the thoughts away from new hearts and spiritual lives. "The Holy Spirit," says Boardman, "gives us one and the same church, even the Holy Catholic Church throughout all lands and times and names." Now in the unseen heavens is "the common destiny, the true Fatherland of all the sons of God," where Jesus is preparing a place for us.

6. Thus his children are taught to live by faith and not by sight, and are trained in character and manhood by the responsibility of carrying on his work. The present system trains "governors and governed, kings and subjects, parents and children, teachers and pupils all alike."

7. The doctrine of the ascension, with its hope of future glory, with its transfigured Son of man (not son of Jew or Greek, but of man) on the throne, "adds new dignity to life," for the lowliest shall be changed into the likeness of his glorified body. "It is an ever-flowing fountain of dignity, of purity, of mercy."

V. **The Promised Return.** — Vs. 10, 11. This was the assurance that Jesus was to be with his people as he had promised, and would carry out his work to complete success.

10. **And while they looked stedfastly.** *Looked stedfastly* is one word in the Greek, and "denotes a fixed, stedfast, protracted gaze." It "is frequently employed by medical writers to denote a peculiar, fixed look. See Hobart, *Medical Language of St. Luke*, p. 76." — *Knowling*. **As he went.** "As he was going." "The present tense denotes that the cloud was still visible for a considerable time, as if carrying their eyes and their hearts with him to heaven." — *Knowling*. They gazed with intense eagerness, questioning what it all meant. **Behold.** Implying suddenness. **Two men.** Angels in the form of men. (Compare Matt. 28: 2–5 with Luke 24: 4.) **In white apparel.** No doubt, like the angel in Matt. 28: 3, "his raiment white as snow," and "in shining garments" (Luke 24: 4). The brilliant whiteness showed their pure nature and the bright home whence they came. As his advent and his resurrection, so his return to heaven was accompanied by ministering angels.

11. **Ye men of Galilee.** All of them were Galileans. **Why stand ye gazing up** as if you had lost your Master, and he was separated from you forever? **This same Jesus.** The very same, but in another form. The physical body was changed into the spiritual, and the earthly beauty into heavenly glory. "Under any circumstances, heavenward gaze, contemplation, seraphic vision, must be exchanged awhile for earth's *duty*. We must come down from the mount, whether it be the Mount of Beatitudes, or of Transfiguration, or of Olivet." **Shall so come in like manner.** Visibly, openly, gloriously. This apparently refers to the final coming of our Lord at the completion of his earthly mission, when shall be fulfilled the description of the new Jerusalem in Rev. 21, 22. The angels only reminded the apostles of what Jesus himself had promised them. "Henceforth (ἀπ' ἄρτι), from this time on, you will see the Son of man seated on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. 26: 64). This did not contradict the promise of his personal coming during that generation as a living Saviour, in the dispensation of the Spirit, in the triumph of his kingdom. Dr. A. J. Gordon says that Christ's promise, "Lo, I am with you alway," was fulfilled in the coming of the Holy Spirit, who will "abide with you forever." "And lest by this discourse about his going and the Comforter's coming we should be led to think that it is not Christ who is with us, he says, clearly referring to the Spirit, 'I will not leave you orphans, *I will come to you*.'" — *How Christ came to Church*, pp. 10, 11. All are parts of one great whole, of which the visible coming here promised is the culmination and crown.

The disciples were not disappointed in their expectations repeatedly expressed of the return of Jesus. They did see the beginnings of that coming, its first rays. They did not understand the times and seasons, but they did know the fact. They did not recognize the coming since it came so gradually. They were right in looking for an early coming; they were also right in looking for one far away.

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12. [1] Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is (fr. m nigh unto) Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey off.

13. And when they were come in, they went up [2] into (an the) upper (room, chamber,) where (abode they were abiding;) both [3] Peter and (James, John) and (John, James) and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James *the son* of Alphæ'ŭs, and [4] Simon (Zēlō'tēs, the Zealot,) and [5] Judas *the* (brother son) of James.

14. [6] These all (continued with one accord with one accord continued stedfastly) in prayer, (and supplication,) with [7] the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with [8] his brethren.

[1] Luke 24: 52.	[4] Luke 6: 15.	[7] Luke 23: 49, 55; 24: 10.
[2] Acts 9: 37.	[5] Jude 1.	[8] Matt. 13: 55.
[3] Matt. 10: 2.	[6] Acts 2: 1, 46.	

NOTE. The hope, the joy, the strength, the glory of the church, is in this promise of the coming again of Jesus, of the triumph of his cause, of his glorious reign. We are not warring and laboring against hope, but with the certainty of the victory through an ever-living, ever-present Saviour, who is sure to come again in his kingdom.

VI. **Waiting for the Promise.** — Vs. 12–14. **12. Returned they unto Jerusalem.** Where they had been commanded to remain; the best place for the manifestation of the Spirit and the fulfilment of the promise. **A sabbath day's journey.** About two thousand cubits, or three fourths of a mile, according to one interpretation of Num. 35: 5 and Josh. 3: 4. The air line distance from the eastern gate of the city to the traditional site of the ascension is twenty-two hundred and fifty feet, but the path is longer. As we are told that Bethany was fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem (John 11: 18), the place of the ascension must have been in the very outskirts of the town.

THE PLACE OF WAITING. **13. Into an upper room.** The Greek has the definite article, "the" upper room, some well-known place of resort. "The upper chamber was, *perhaps*, that in which the Last Supper had been taken; *probably* that in which they had been since then assembled (John 20: 19, 26), but *certainly* one in a *private house.*" — *Alford.* It is spoken of in Acts 2: 2 as part of a house. **Where abode.** Not as a home, but as a regular place of meeting, their church home. Besides this, they were regular attendants at the temple services (at nine and at three o'clock). The eleven apostles, as named, were the central company.

THE COMPANY PRESENT. **Both Peter,** etc. The list of apostles is here given (1) in order to show that all had returned except Judas, who had committed suicide, and were accepted by Christ as his apostles; and (2) from "the desire of the author to intimate that although only the works of a few on the list would be chronicled, yet all alike were witnesses to Christ and workers for him." — *Cambridge Bible.* **James,** in the Greek, "Jacobus," the same as Jacob. **Judas,** "Jude," the author of the epistle.

14. With the women. Both Erasmus and Calvin interpret this as meaning "with their wives." Lightfoot allows this, so far as they had wives, but considers that meaning to be too limited. Doubtless there were present the women mentioned in the Gospels as ministering to Jesus, and watching around the cross, — Mary Magdalene; Mary, the mother of James and Joses; Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward; Salome, the mother of John; Susanna (Luke 8: 3; John 19: 25); and why not Martha and Mary of Bethany. Especially named was **Mary the mother of Jesus,** who is here mentioned for the last time, "and the Scripture leaves her in prayer."

> "Who above all mothers shone,
> The mother of the Blessed One."

"The beautiful gate of the Jewish Temple," says Burton, "opened into the 'Court of the Women.' And as we open the gate of the third Gospel, we enter the 'Court of the Women'; for, more than any other evangelist, St. Luke records their loving and varied ministries. **And with his brethren.** James, Joses, Simon, Jude (Matt. 13: 55; 27: 56). There has been an age-long discussion whether these were the sons of Joseph and Mary, or of Joseph by a former wife, or were his adopted sons, and only cousins of Jesus by blood-relationship, but brethren by adoption. "They are previously mentioned as unbelieving (John 7: 5; comp. Mark 6: 4), but not only the resurrection of the Lord, but also that of Lazarus may well have overcome their unbelief. It may well have been that James was converted by the resurrection (1 Cor. 15: 5)." — *Knowling.* In all, there were one hundred and twenty belonging to this assembly.

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HOW THEY WAITED. 1. Steadfastly, persistently. *They continued.* They were προσκαρτεροῦντες, from καρτερός, *strong*, and πρός, *to, strongly adhering to, persisting steadfastly* as against all obstacles and enemies. Some one has said that perseverance is the only virtue that cannot be counterfeited.

2. *With one accord*, ὁμοθυμαδόν, from ὁμός, *together*, and θυμός, *ardor, feeling*, from θύω, *to rush along*. Not necessarily of one opinion, but of one zeal, feeling, desire, purpose.

"Many as the waves, but one as the sea."

The promise is to those who are of one accord, in their ardor, in pursuit of a common object. When two or three are gathered together in Jesus' name, he is present with them. When they agree together for any object it will be granted. The Greek word for "agree," in Matt. 18: 19, is that from which comes our word "symphony," a harmony of different tones and notes.

ILLUSTRATION. Continuing, abiding together in prayer is a great power. The edge of the axe does the cutting, but its power to cut depends largely upon the mass back of it. One voice may utter the truth or the prayer, but power comes from the whole body of people behind it.

ILLUSTRATION. Men and women were together. This is one of the silent results of the gospel, the uniting of men and women in the work of saving the world. Witness it in the Women's Boards of Missions, and in a thousand ways.

3. They waited with prayer, waiting on the Lord in expectation of the fulfilment of his promise. They were prepared for receiving the power of the Holy Spirit.

4. While they were praying they were also doing the duties that came to hand, for they took measures to choose another apostle in the place of Judas.

LESSON II. — January 12.

THE PROMISE OF POWER FULFILLED.

Acts 2 : 1–11.

Study Verses 1–21. Read Acts 2 : 1–36; Joel 2 : 21–32.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***The promise is unto you and to your children.*** — ACTS 2: 39.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Place in the History. — Point out how this lesson is related to what went before, and what is to come after. Our Lord being alive, and exalted to power and glory in the heavens, now by a visible expression proves that he is working on earth through his disciples.

Here, too, was the power which transformed common men into apostles, and which made their witness to the Saviour to be effective on the hearts of men. Without this their whole mission would have been a failure. With the duty came the power to accomplish it.

Picturesque. — This event can be made very vivid and real by a series of descriptive word pictures.

THE SECTION

includes in the teaching Acts 2: 1–21, and the prophecy of Joel 2: 28–32.

THE SETTING.

The morning of Saturday or Sunday, May 27 or 28, A. D. 30.

The Time. Ten days after the last lesson, Pentecost, Whitsunday.

The Place. Jerusalem, in the upper room, where the disciples met for prayer.

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 1–4, 17, 18, 21.

See that the scholars learn some or all of these verses. Drill them to repeat the verses in concert.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

On the gift of tongues, see Professor Knowling's *Expositor's Greek Testament*, note on pp. 98–100; Rendall's *Acts of the*

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PICTURES.

Reproduced in half-tone, *Tomb of David* (scene of the upper room); *The Descent of the Spirit*, from an old Italian painting (artist unknown).

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: The Coming of the Holy Spirit, through whom the Commission to the Apostles could be accomplished.

I. THE ASSEMBLY ON PENTECOST (v. 1).

How the disciples prepared for the baptism of the Spirit.

II. THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (vs. 2–4).

The power.
The symbols which revealed it.

III. THE RESULTS FROM THIS NEW POWER. THE NEW ERA BEGUN (vs. 4–11).

Speaking with tongues.
Arousing a deep general interest.

IV. THE EFFECTS OF THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT.

On the apostles.
On the people as a whole.
On opposers.
On the church.

Apostles, pp. 175, 176; Bartlett's *The Apostolic Age*, pp. 11–14; Professor Briggs' *The Messiah of the Gospels*, pp. 21–23; Schaff's *History of the Christian Church*, vol. I., pp. 231–242; Farrar's *Life of St. Paul*, chap. 5; *Expositor's Bible* on Acts 2; Professor McGiffert's *Apostolic Age*, pp. 48–53 (an improbable interpretation); Luckock's *Footprints of the Apostles*, pp. 61–69; Professor Purves' *The Apostolic Age*, pp. 31–34; Dr. Gordon's *How Christ came to Church* and his *Ministry of the Spirit*; A. T. Pierson's *The Acts of the Holy Spirit*; Thatcher's *The Apostolic Church*; Arthur's *The Tongue of Fire*; Hare's *Mission of the Comforter*.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

These subjects can be specially discussed in the class. It is well to assign them the previous Sabbath, for home investigation and thought, to be reported in the class.

1. The relation of this lesson to the history of the church.
2. Why the Spirit came on Pentecost.
3. The symbol of the wind.
4. The symbol of the flame.
5. The symbol of the tongues.
6. The gift of tongues.
7. The prophecy.
8. The application to the present day.

1. And when [1] the day of Pentecost [a] was (fully now) come, [2] they were all (with one accord together) in one place.

[1] Lev. 23: 15; Acts 20: 16. [a] Greek, *was being fulfilled.* [2] Acts 1: 14.

I. The Assembly on Pentecost. — V. 1. WHEN. 1. **The day of Pentecost was fully come.** Was being completed. It was at the beginning of the day which was not yet complete. The day had not merely dawned, but was shining in its full glory, showing how bright must have been the flame that appeared. Pentecost was a harvest festival, celebrated fifty days after the Passover. The word means *fiftieth*.

WHO. The one hundred and twenty disciples named in the last chapter, including the apostles, the women, and those who believed in the resurrection of Jesus, and in his promise.

WHERE. **With one accord in one place.** The upper room in Jerusalem, mentioned in the previous chapter.

HOW LONG. During ten days from the ascension.

CHARACTER OF THE MEETING. (1) With one accord, with one spirit, one purpose, one desire, one hope. There was no discordant note. (2) It was a meeting for prayer and supplication, as a preparation for the blessing which was to come. (3) It was a meeting for conference, as we see in Acts 1: 15–22. (4) It was a meeting for the transaction of necessary church business, conducted in a devotional spirit (Acts 1: 23–26). (5) It was a protracted meeting, lasting ten days, from the ascension to Pentecost, Sunday, May 18. (6) They were in expectation of a great blessing, but what or when or how they did not know. Thus they were best led to watch and pray, to open their minds to the truth, to be bound together in love, to purify their hearts for the coming of the great gift.

SPECIAL FITNESS OF THE TIME. 1. It was called the "day of the first-fruits" (Num. 28: 26), or "feast of harvest" (Ex. 23: 16). The wheat-fields were then white with the harvest. It was to be a great harvest ingathering of disciples.

2. It was, according to a probable Jewish tradition, the anniversary of the giving of the law from Sinai, the revelation that ushered in the first dispensation. It was thus specially

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2. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven from heaven a sound as of a the rushing of a mighty wind, and [1] it filled all the house where they were sitting.

3. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them.

[1] Acts 4: 31.

fitting that the new dispensation begin on the same day, the day of promulgation of the new and better Law, — the Law of Faith and Love and Hope.

3. It was the day on which especially the Jew was to remember his deliverance from the bondage of Egypt (Deut. 16: 12) into the freedom of the promised land, and now into the glorious freedom of the sons of God.

4. Because at this feast, being in the summer, greater numbers were present in Jerusalem than at any other season, from all parts of the world. "From a census taken in the time of Nero, more than two million seven hundred thousand were gathered at the Passover, and still greater numbers came to Pentecost." From this center the power would radiate to all parts of the world. Those who came were the Jews of the Dispersion, and proselytes to the Jewish religion, expecting the Messiah.

A TIME OF PREPARATION. All this devotion, this praying, this waiting, was a necessary part of the training of the disciples, and their spiritual preparation for the reception of the Holy Spirit, and his work in them and through them.

II. The Coming of the Holy Spirit. — Vs. 2–4. This was one of the greatest, most epochal days in the world's history. **2. And suddenly.** As they were praying. So the lightning breaks forth suddenly from the cloud, but the electricity that prepared for it had been gathering silently for hours.

ILLUSTRATION. Mr. Spurgeon says: "I looked recently at a very remarkable sight, the burning of a huge floorcloth manufactory. I was just about returning home from my Master's work when I saw a little blaze, and in an incredibly short space a volume of fire rolled up in great masses to the skies. Why blazed it so suddenly? Why, because for months before many men had been busily employed in hanging up the floorcloth, and in saturating the building with combustible materials. I do not mean with the intention of making a blaze, but in the ordinary course of their manufacture; so that when at last the spark came it grew into a great sheet of flame all at once." So it is with an individual soul; so sometimes with a community. "God had been mysteriously at work months before in that man's heart, preparing his soul to catch the heavenly flame, so that there was only a spark needed and then up rolled the flame to heaven."

A sound . . . as of a rushing mighty wind. R. V., "as of the rushing of a mighty wind," Φερομένης πνοῆς βιαίας, *a mighty wind borne along.* πνοῆς, *wind*, is from πνέω, *to breathe, to blow;* whence also πνεῦμα, *spirit, breath.* It is not said that there was any wind, but only *a sound as of a wind.* No "whirlwind shook the building." The audible sign filling the room announced the power represented by it as doing the same. — *Prof. Alvah Hovey, D.D.* **And it filled all the house.** Not merely the upper room of Acts 1: 13. This was a token that the Spirit would fill the whole church, which is the house of God (1 Tim. 3: 15), and that it filled every part and faculty of the soul, which is the temple of the Holy Ghost.

3. And there appeared. The audible sign is followed by a visible. **Cloven tongues like as of fire.** Not fire, but with the appearance and brightness of fire, as the burning bush which Moses saw. *Cloven.* Parted as from a central flame. διαμεριζόμεναι γλῶσσαι, *tongues distributing themselves throughout,* from διά, *throughout,* and μερίζω, *to part, to distribute.* The idea is not that each tongue of fire was divided or forked, but that the fiery appearance, at first presenting itself as a single body, one mighty flame of fire, soon divided into separate tongues of flame, one for each person in the assembly. "The present participle denotes a process seen in actual operation. Tongues of fire were seen to detach themselves and settle on the several Christians there present." — *Rendall.* Plumptre likens it to a shower of fiery tongues. "A lambent flame upon the head was believed by the Rabbins to be a token of divine favor (*Schöttgen*); as by classic poets, Homer (*Iliad* 13: 214), Virgil (*Æneid* 2: 683)." — *Cook.* "See instances in *Wetstein.* But the thought here is not so much of fire as the token of divine favor, as of the tongue, as of fire, conferring a divine power to utter in speech divine things." — *Knowling.* **And it,** the appearance of flame, one tongue, **sat upon each of them.** Apostles, laymen, and women. *Sat* denotes that the appearance was not a momentary flash, and that the influence, which

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4. And [1] they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, Spirit, and began [2] to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

[1] Acts 1: 5. [2] Mark 16: 17; Acts 10: 46; 1 Cor. 12: 10, 28, 30; 13: 1.

it symbolized, was to be permanent. The Spirit henceforth was to abide in the church, and "hold his throne and seat there, as the Shekinah in the holy of holies of old," and as the spirit of life abides in our bodies, the organizing, controlling, life-giving power.

The twofold aspect of the church is here represented. (1) Its unity was shown by the original mass of flame, all of one nature; and then (2) the individual aspect, for the flame separated and each person had his own distinct share.

Swiftly and straight each tongue of flame,
Through cloud and breeze, unwavering came,
And darted to its place of rest
On some meek brow of Jesus blest.
Nor fades it yet that living gleam;
And still those lambent lightnings stream;
Where'er the Lord is, there are they;
In every heart that gives him room
They light his altar every day,
Zeal to inflame and vice consume.
—*John Keble.*

4. **And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.** "*Filled* can mean nothing less than that the whole capacity of each man was occupied, and all his being under the influence. The degree of receptivity varied, no doubt, but the lesser and the greater vessels were all full. The whole nature was influenced; for that divine Spirit can enter into every part of a soul, and will prove himself the spirit of truth to the understanding, the spirit of power and of love, and of self-control to the will, and the affections, and the governing reason, the spirit of sound understanding to the practical man; and the whole nature, filled with him, will flame with new brilliance, like a bit of black carbon in a stream of electricity. The Spirit of God has all humanity for its sphere of action." — *Maclaren.*

NOTE 1. That the Holy Spirit was not now for the first time bestowed upon men is plain, from the fact that "the same language here employed is used respecting Elizabeth (Luke 1: 41), Zacharias (Luke 1: 67), and John the Baptist (Luke 1: 15); and the Old Testament repeatedly makes mention of the influence of the Holy Spirit upon the minds of the prophets and others." "That which was peculiar in this event is, that (1) now, for the first time, *all* were filled with the Holy Ghost, not merely the apostles; and (2) the influence was not occasional and transient, but abiding." — *Abbott.* (3) But the chief difference is the *abundance* and *power* with which the Holy Spirit is now given, thus characterizing the gospel times as the dispensation of the Spirit. Formerly the gift was like the dew, now it is like the rain; formerly like the early dawning light, now like the full splendor and power of the day; formerly like the first early fruits, now like an abundant harvest. (4) Says Dr. Alvah Hovey: "It implies a reception from the Spirit of extraordinary powers, in addition to ordinary sanctifying grace." It was enduement for service.

NOTE 2. There could be no mistake about this being a divine power actually bestowed. The effects produced prove this. Nothing less than divine power could have so changed the disciples from common men to men able to "turn the world upside down," and change the whole course of history. Nothing less than divine power could have wrought such changes in the lives and moral character of such great numbers.

NOTE 3. This gift was bestowed not only upon the apostles, but the whole worshiping church.

NOTE 4. The signs that accompanied this power were to reveal the fact, "in letters that could be read from the stars," that the invisible Holy Spirit was actually present, to make the fact clear and unmistakable, to show the source whence the power and its effects came, and to illustrate its nature.

ILLUSTRATIONS. The great forces of the world are invisible, as steam, when powerful enough to do work, as electricity, as chemical forces, the X-rays, gravitation. We recognize them by special manifestations. We know electricity is everywhere, by the lightning. We know it is in the wire by its light, or motor work. There is need of these special manifestations, or we would never have known and realized these unseen powers.

COMPARE the coming of the fire upon the altar and sacrifice upon Mt. Carmel, while Elijah was praying for the fire.

SEE Dwight L. Moody's experience, SELECT NOTES, 1892, p. 200.

THE SYMBOL OF THE WIND. The Greek word, as the Hebrew word, for "spirit" is the same as that for "wind," which is the natural metaphor to represent the spirit. Jesus himself so uses it in John 3: 8.

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1. It is an invisible power of which no one knows "whence it cometh or whither it goeth." You see the results, but you cannot tell the causes, which are beyond our reach. Even to-day, when we have daily reports from the weather bureau, no one knows where and when a storm will arise. They see the storm and its direction, and can tell with great probability to what place it is going and when it will get there. But for beginning and end they know not whence it cometh or whither it goeth.

2. But we recognize it by its effects, in sound, in music, in force, in life.

3. It is very powerful. The air is so powerful that even free dynamite smiting against it on one side crushes the rocks on the other. Compare a great storm at sea.

4. Yet it is very gentle and delicate, breathing around the rose, and gently touching the little child.

5. It comes pure from heaven.

6. The air is all-pervasive. It penetrates the hardest rock.

7. It is the breath of life. No one can live without it.

> "We are but organs mute, till a master touches the keys —
> Verily, vessels of earth into which God poureth the wine;
> Harps are we, silent harps that have hung on the willow trees,
> Dumb till our heartstrings swell and break with a pulse divine."

THE SYMBOL OF THE FLAME. John the Baptist had said that "Jesus shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." Fire is one of the most expressive symbols of the Holy Spirit. Fire, shining in light, is mysterious in nature, ineffably bright and glorious, everywhere present, swift-winged, undefiled, and undefilable.

1. It represents the revealing power of the Holy Spirit, shining into each soul, and illuminating it as a house when the lamps are lighted within; as a twilight scene when the sun rises upon it.

2. It expresses the purifying, cleansing power of the Spirit. Fire and light are the great disease killers. So is the Spirit to moral diseases. He always purifies the soul where he dwells. He is the refining fire that cleanses the dross from the pure gold.

3. It symbolized the comfort, warmth, cheer, fresh life, joy, peace, which the Holy Spirit imparts.

4. The far-reaching power of light expressed the light which the disciples should impart to the world. Light cannot be hidden. If it ceases to shine, it ceases to exist.

5. Light convinces the world of dust, of dirt, of a thousand evil things unknown in the darkness. For example, a ray of light in a dusty room, and Tyndall's ray through the glass tube showing seed germs that no other process could make known. So the Spirit convinces of sin, of the evils in the heart. He does more than this: he causes men to feel as well as to see.

6. Fire is the symbol of intense energy and zeal. The Holy Spirit fills the soul with glowing enthusiasms and unconquerable energy and zeal.

THE SYMBOL OF THE TONGUE. "The human tongue, illuminated and sanctified by fire from the inner sanctuary, was about to be the instrument of the gospel's advancement, — not penal laws, not the sword and fire of persecution; and so long as the divinely appointed means were adhered to, so long the course of our holy religion was one long-continued triumph." — *Professor Stokes* in *Expositor's Bible*.

1. The tongues represent the instrument and method to be used for the spread of the gospel.

2. "This miracle was meant to foreshadow the universal progress of the new faith, and its message for all mankind, without distinction of nation, position, or age." — *Professor Knowling*. "Pentecost is the reversal of Babel." The Bible in whole or in part is translated into more than four hundred languages and dialects, all the principal ones of the world. This is the modern Pentecost, whenever the Holy Spirit in Christ's disciples makes these tongues speak the gospel of Jesus Christ.

3. But it must ever be a tongue of fire, a tongue inspired and filled with the Spirit. The best preaching is "logic set on fire." "The *fiery sword*," said St. Cyril, "barred of old the gates of paradise; the *fiery tongue*, which brought salvation, restored the gift."

4. It was the symbol of the unity of the church, — one spirit, but many tongues.

5. Those who are filled with the Spirit speak to all hearts, all needs, all characters. Not each disciple to all, but some disciple for each need. They speak with new tongues, new meaning, new power. The tongue is the outlet of the soul. A new spirit always means a new tongue.

THE SYMBOL OF THE DOVE. It is well along with these other symbols of the Holy

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5. And Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of from every nation under heaven.

6. Now And [a] when this was noised abroad, sound was heard, the multitude came together, and were [b] confounded, because that every man heard them speak speaking in his own language.

a Greek, *when this voice was made.* *b* Greek, or, *troubled in mind.*



From a Photograph by Wilson.

Mount Moriah. The Temple Area.
Reputed Upper Room in the group of buildings on the right of the picture.

Spirit to recall the other symbol so often referred to in the Gospels, that of the dove, — the symbol of innocence, gentleness, tenderness, and love. By these, as well as by fire, was Jesus victorious. "He wooed and won." The Spirit produces, in the hearts of those who dwell in the Spirit, the dove-like nature, — gentle, loving, attractive. The dove and the fire are complementary symbols expressing different aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit. As Bishop Hackett says: "The Holy Ghost was made manifest in a dove and in fire; to betoken it is the same Spirit which requires innocency in the saints, but would not have them forget zeal. If the dove sit upon your head, it will instil simplicity, but simplicity may be chill and faint in a good cause. Therefore, if a pillar of fire sit upon your head, it will infuse fervency."

III. **The Results from This New Power. The New Era Begun.** — Vs. 4–11. **Began to speak with other tongues,** in other languages than their own Hebrew, or Aramaic (the then modern form of the Hebrew), or Greek; with all three of which they naturally were more or less familiar. "Luke distinctly asserts that the apostles, if not the whole Christian assembly, received the power of speaking in foreign languages, and that some of the hearers, at all events, understood them." — *Knowling.*

5. **And there were dwelling at Jerusalem.** Both residents (for the foreign Jews loved to spend their declining years there) and pilgrims who had come up to the Pentecost feast. **Devout men.** Truly religious men, waiting for the appearing of the promised Messiah. These were the persons most likely to become Christians. Such an one was Simeon (Luke 2: 25), who is described by the same word "devout," and as "waiting for the consolation of Israel." **Out of every nation under heaven.** Only a very small portion of the Jewish people lived in Palestine during the times of our Lord and his apostles; by far the largest number were natives of other lands. — *Professor Lindsay.*

6. **Now when this was noised abroad.** Better as in R. V., "And when this sound was heard." Literally, *this sound having taken place.* The Greek word here for "sound" is never used for "report" or "rumor." It must mean either the sound of the rushing, mighty wind (*Meyer*), or the sound of the disciples talking in the various languages (*Neander*). The sound was heard outside of the house and drew the attention of the passing crowds. **And were confounded.** The Greek word means *poured together*, and our word "confound" is from the Latin, with the same meaning. The picture is of a cascade pouring into a pool, or of streams rushing together, making a confused mingling of the waters. The whole assembly were thrown into confusion, or the individuals were perplexed and confused as to the meaning of this strange phenomenon. **Every man heard them** (was hearing, imperfect) **speak in his own language.** A different word from "tongues" in v. 4. It means both dialect and language.

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7. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying, one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak [1] Galilæans?

8. And how hear we, every man in our own tongue, language, wherein we were born?

9. Par'thĭăns, and Mēdes, and E'lămītes, and the dwellers in Mĕsŏ-pŏtā'mĭă, and in Jūdæ'ă, and Căppădō'cĭă, in Pŏn'tŭs, and A'sia,

10. in Phryg'ĭă, and Pămphyl'ĭă, in Egypt, and in the parts of Lĭb'yă about Cyrē'nē, and strangers of sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes,

11. Cretes, Cretans and Arā'bĭăns, we do hear them speak, speaking in our tongues the wonderful, mighty works of God.

[1] Acts 1: 11.

"It is difficult for us who travel over vast areas of one language to understand the confusion and perplexity now existing in Oriental lands, where the greatest empires 'are merely a congeries of unamalgamated and jealous tribes'; and racial distinctions, separate governments, and restricted commercial intercourse have preserved, and very often created, distinct and mutually unintelligible dialects and languages." — *Tristram.* Each one did not speak all the languages, but some spoke each of them, so that they recognized the wonder when they heard ordinary people, who had never been educated and never traveled out of Palestine, speak rare, strange, and difficult languages.

7. **All amazed,** with sudden, overwhelming surprise. **And marvelled,** with a continuing, questioning wonder. **All . . . Galilæans.** All the disciples (except Judas) were from Galilee.

8. **In our own tongue.** Language, dialect; same word as in v. 6. So, still, the Bible speaks the universal language, coming home to each soul of whatever nation or race, speaking to his individual needs, and answering to his longings and prayers.

9. **Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites,** in the Persian Empire beyond the Tigris, and including Turkistan and Afghanistan to the border of India. Here some of the ten tribes were settled by Shalmanezer. They all spoke Persian, but in different provincial forms and dialects. **Mesopotamia,** *i. e.*, "between the rivers" Tigris and Euphrates. It includes Assyria and Babylonia, now belonging to the Turkish Empire. The language was some form of Chaldee. **Judæa.** Speaking Aramaic in a different dialect from Galilee. **Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia.** Not our Asia, but a small Roman province in what is now Asia Minor.

10. **Phrygia, and Pamphylia.** Here Greek, a different dialect in each, was spoken by the educated, but the common people had their own dialects. The above five were all in Asia Minor. **Egypt,** where the language was Coptic. **Libya,** in northern Africa, the portion referred to being **Cyrene,** on the Mediterranean. Their language is not certainly known, but they must have spoken also Greek. **Rome,** with the Latin language. **Jews and proselytes,** *i. e.*, heathen who had accepted the Jewish religion. These terms probably include all the preceding nations.

11. **Cretes,** from the island of Crete in the Mediterranean, now called Candia. They may have spoken Greek. **Arabians,** from the great peninsula which stretches between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. They spoke Arabic. **The wonderful works of God.** The disciples told the people of all these countries, in their own languages, about God's wondrous love in sending his son Jesus, the Messiah, to save men from sin, and bring in the glorious days foretold by the prophets.

THE NATURE OF THE GIFT OF TONGUES. The interpretation of this has perplexed commentators almost as much as the actual event perplexed the hearers then.

1. We have two comparatively full accounts of speaking with tongues: one here and the other in 1 Cor. 14: 1–33, with several other references to the fact.

2. The phenomena described in the two places, while differing somewhat in manifestation and form, are doubtless one and the same gift. In essence and in source they are identical.

3. The gift was "evidently the frenzied or ecstatic utterance of sounds ordinarily unintelligible both to speakers and hearers. . . . The speaker was supposed to be completely under the control of the spirit, to be a mere passive instrument in his hands, and to be moved and played upon by him. — *McGiffert.* "In it men were raised above their normal selves by a divine impulse. — *Bartlett.* "I believe the event related in our text to have

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been *a sudden and powerful inspiration of the Holy Spirit, by which the disciples uttered not of their minds, but as mouthpieces of the Spirit, the praises of God in various languages, hitherto, and possibly at the time itself, unknown to them.* How is this related to the *speaking with tongues* afterward spoken of by St. Paul (1 Cor. 14)? I answer that they were one and the same thing." — *Alford.*

4. Those who spoke with tongues spoke the actual languages referred to, whether they themselves understood them or not. The Expositor's Greek New Testament, on 1 Cor. 14: 13, says: "It appears that the speaker with tongues, in some instances, could recall, on recovery, what he had uttered in his trance ecstasy, so as to render it in actual speech."

ILLUSTRATION. Professor Stokes makes use of the scientific fact of hypnotism, which shows that "it is impossible to assign any limits to the influence of the mind over the body," to show that such an impartation of the gift of speech is certainly possible.

5. Was this a permanent gift for preaching the gospel? (1) "The gift was the gift of an age of the spirit, and for a period of preaching the gospel." The gift "was not a permanent one, any more than the presence of the dove on the head of Jesus was permanent; but the presence of the Spirit was to be as permanent with the disciples as it had been with Jesus. Nothing is said of the use of this gift in preaching. In most places it was not needed. But Paul, who spake with tongues more than most others (1 Cor. 14: 18), may have used the gift in Asia Minor. "Professor Ramsay, in his late book, *The Church in the Roman Empire*, says that in Asia Minor, while most books were written in Greek, and Greek and Latin were used by the officials and the educated, the great body of the people, to whom Paul preached, knew only their own dialect. Twelve unlearned men, chiefly Galilæan peasants, could not well evangelize the world without the gift of tongues." As Greek then, so "English now will carry a man over the world, but English will not enable him to preach to the people of India or of China." — *Professor Stokes* in *Expositor's Bible.* But for the most part the gift had another purpose.

6. "The Spirit of God, mingling with the soul of man, supernaturally elevated its aspirations and glorified its conceptions, so that an entranced state of ecstasy was produced, and feelings called into energy, for the expression of which the ordinary forms of speech were inadequate. . . . It was to be expected that when divine and new feelings rushed like a flood upon the soul, the language of men would become strange and extraordinary." — *F. W. Robertson* in *Sermons, Vol. III., p. 81.*

7. It was needful that there should be some manifest external sign, both as an unmistakable proof to the disciples that the promise was fulfilled, and as a sign to the unbelieving world (1 Cor. 14: 22) that Jesus was living, a real power. "Every accessory, every instrument of usefulness, the church has now in such a degree and of such excellence as was never known in any other age; and we want but a supreme and glorious baptism of fire to exhibit to the world such a spectacle as would raise ten thousand hallelujahs to the glory of our king." — *Rev. W. Arthur.*

8. "The special and miraculous phase of this gift of tongues, whatever it may have been, has passed away, but in a most real and inward sense this gift and duty of the tongues remains. Oh! when among us, and now, a man has opened himself to the inbreathings of the divine Spirit, when he begins to know by sweet and wonderful consciousness that Christ is in him, when the grand liberty of the sons of God has broken the shackles from his soul, then does he not begin to speak with new and other tongues? With the tongue of a deep personal experience, with the tongue of joy, with the tongue of triumph, — with such new tongues he does begin to speak. In this meaning the gift of the tongues remains." — *Wayland Hoyt, D.D.*

IV. **The Effects of the Gift of the Spirit.** — Vs, 12–21. FIRST EFFECT. The effect of this gift of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles was a wonderful change in them. It was almost a transfiguration experience. So the dead wire is thrilled with electricity, and bursts out into light and power. They were common men no longer. As Mosheim says, "Their ignorance was turned into light, their doubts into certainty, their fears into a firm and invincible fortitude, and their former backwardness into an ardent and inextinguishable zeal." Note especially the change in Peter from the man who, two months before, had forsaken his Lord and fled, and thrice denied him. Then Peter "had to speak on the spur of the moment, and to a crowd excited as only an Eastern crowd can be. It is not easy for the most practised orator to catch the ear and hold the attention of a confused and hostile crowd. Shakespeare means us to recognize consummate skill in Mark Antony's handling of the Roman citizens at Cæsar's funeral; but he used flattering words, and he spoke in order to rouse the people against the assassins of Cæsar, not against themselves. St. Peter had to address the crowd on a theme which could not be welcome, and to stir

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12. And they were all amazed, and were [in doubt, perplexed,] saying one to another, What meaneth this?

13. [Others / But others] mocking said, [These men / They] are [full of / filled with] new wine.

them to self-condemnation. Yet we see no trace of hesitation or embarrassment." — *Donald Frazer*, in *Speeches of the Apostles*.

SECOND EFFECT. On the people the effect was, at first, one of intense amazement and perplexity. **12. Amazed.** The Greek verb is one of which our word "ecstasy" is almost a transliteration. It means *to throw out of position*, hence, *to drive one out of one's senses*, hence, *to amaze, astonish*. **Were in doubt,** "perplexity." The Greek word is compound, meaning, *to be without a way out or through*. The radical idea of the compound verb seems to be of one who goes through the whole list of possible ways, and finds no way out. Hence, *to be in perplexity.* — *M. R. Vincent.* They could not understand the meaning till Peter explained it to them.

THIRD EFFECT. **13. Others mocking.** The Greek is from a word meaning *a jest or joke*, and the preposition *through*. To them it was a jest all through, something to be sneered at. **These men are full of new wine.** At that season there was no new wine, in the sense of unfermented. But it refers to the last vintage of the precious autumn. It was "sweet wine," still in the process of fermenting, "referring to the lusciousness of the quality of its make, and not of necessity to the brevity of its age." — *Knowling.* Only those foreign Jews of each country could understand what was said in their own language. To all others the words were unintelligible, and seemed like a meaningless babel. Similar results are often noticed in a revival of religion. We know there is a great power for good, when the opposition is strong. There is no excitement against a cold church or an indifferent religion. But when men rage against the truth, then take courage, for there is power on your side. Peter, in his sermon, defends the disciples from this charge of drunkenness. They well knew that "in the East men drink only in the evening, so that no drunken person is ever seen by day." — *Geikie.* (See the story of the "Sleeper Awakened" in the *Arabian Nights.*)

FOURTH EFFECT. There came a wonderful power upon the people, leading three thousand of them to become disciples in one day. Such a power has been often felt since, and nothing can account for it but the Holy Spirit of God. Peter's sermon will be considered in our next lesson.

LESSON III. — January 19.

THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH. — Acts 2: 37-47.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*** ACTS 2: 47.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Place in the History. — Here we have a picture of the first Christian church, the most delightful community that has ever been even imagined. It is full not only of charm, but of helpfulness to our own Christian life.

It was the fruit of the coming of the Holy Spirit studied in our last lesson, and the beginning of the great work of the apostles. It inspired them with faith and hope and courage for all their future labors.

Scenes. — This lesson, too, can be presented in a series of word pictures.

THE SECTION

includes Peter's sermon as an introduction, as well as the description of its effects, and the sudden increase of disciples in the verses of the lesson.

PICTURES.

St. Peter, portrait from Da Vinci's *Last Supper*; *St. Peter, Martyr*, Fra Angelico (Florence); *St. Peter, Preaching*, Fra Angelico (Florence); *The Apostles Preaching*, Doré (London).

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LEARN BY HEART.

Have the scholars repeat till they know by heart vs. 42–47.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

These can be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

1. The outline of Peter's sermon.
2. Its characteristics.
3. Its effect, and the reasons for it.
4. Public confession by baptism.
5. The picture of the early church.
6. Community of goods.
7. Characteristics of the early church.
8. How far they apply to the present days.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

The *Commentaries* and books on *The Apostolic Age;* the Apostles Peter and John, in Vance's *College of the Apostles;* Peloubet's *Suggestive Illustrations* on Acts, pp. 47–76 ($1.25); *The Apostle Peter*, by Rev. William M. Taylor ($1.50) and by Rev. S. G. Green ($1.50); Rev. Dr. A. J. Gordon's *How Christ came to Church* (Baptist Pub. Soc.); Meyer's *From Calvary to Pentecost;* the description of the church in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress.*

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. Probably on Sunday, May 28, A. D. 30. The Feast of Pentecost, Whitsunday. The same day as the last lesson, but continuing into the days following.

Place. Jerusalem, in the vicinity of the upper room where the disciples met; and afterwards in the temple, and elsewhere in the city.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: A Picture of the First Christian Church.

I. PETER'S SERMON (vs. 14–36).

Circumstances; theme; argument.
The instrumentality by which the church was formed.

II. THE INQUIRY MEETING (vs. 37–40).

Conviction of sin. Inquiry what to do.
The answer. The motives. Exhortation.

III. JOINING THE CHURCH (v. 41).

Conditions of membership.
By baptism. The number who joined.

IV. THE CHURCH BEAUTIFUL. AN IDEAL FOR ALL THE AGES (vs. 42–47).

1. Training in the Christian life, by instruction, by fellowship, by ordinances, by prayer-meetings.
2. Christian deeds. Miracles. Generous giving.
3. Worship. In the temple. At home.
4. Characteristics. Joy, praise, love. Favor with God and man.
5. Fruits — many converts.

I. **Peter's Sermon.** — Vs. 14–36. In our last lesson we left the multitude amazed and perplexed at the wonderful power so vividly manifested before them, while some mockingly declared that what they had seen was but the frenzied ravings of those who had taken too much wine. In response, Peter as the representative of the apostles, and filled with the Holy Spirit, made an address to the gathering multitudes. Of course only an outline is given in the Acts.

THE OPENING REMARKS.

Peter begins by taking up the report of those who explained the strange phenomenon by the accusation of too much wine. He makes a kindly and reasonable denial. He shows that the charge arose from ignorance of the facts, and was impossible under the circumstances (vs. 14, 15). The excitement of wine could produce no such results as were here manifested, and never did.

THE THEME.

JESUS OF NAZARETH WAS THE PROMISED MESSIAH.

THE ARGUMENT.

1. What they had seen was the fulfilment of a prophecy of the Messianic times, by a prophet they accepted as true, and whose prophecy they themselves applied to their expected Messiah (vs. 16–22).

2. Jesus Christ did the works of the Messiah, and was proved to be the Messiah by God himself, by means of signs and wonders, of which they themselves were witnesses. And although they crucified Jesus, God defeated their plans, and proved that Jesus was the Messiah by raising him from the dead (vs. 23, 24).

3. The argument was clinched by an appeal to the Scriptures which God, by raising up Jesus, fulfilled to the letter (vs. 25–32).

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37. Now when they heard *this*, [1] they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Pē'ter and [to] the rest of the apostles, [Men *and* brethren, Brethren,] what shall we do?

[1] Luke 3: 10; Acts 9: 6; 16: 30.

4. What they had just seen was the gift of Jesus promised by the Father, and this was again reenforced by the Scriptures (vs. 33-35).

CONCLUSION.

THE PROOF WAS COMPLETE THAT

GOD HATH MADE THAT SAME JESUS, WHOM YE CRUCIFIED, BOTH LORD AND MESSIAH.

NOTES. **26. Shall rest,** κατασκηνώσει. Literally, *shall dwell in a tent or tabernacle;* from κατά, *down from, from a higher to a lower place;* and σκηνή, *a tent,* — *shall encamp or place my tabernacle on hope,* abiding there till hope shall be transformed to realization. Professor Vincent, in his admirable *Word Studies,* says: "It is a beautiful metaphor. My flesh shall *encamp on hope;* pitch its tent there to rest through the night of death, until the morning of resurrection."

29. Patriarch, πατριάρχου; from πατριά, *a lineage, a family, a race,* and ἄρχω, *to begin;* hence, *one who begins a new family, or race.*

36. Assuredly, ἀσφαλῶς, from ἀ, *not,* and σφάλλω, *to cause to fall,* as in wrestling; *to overthrow,* as a ship by a storm, or as an army by the enemy; *to defeat, to delude, to cause to err, or go wrong.* Hence, the compound word means *to know with such certainty that there can be no falling, no defeat, no mistake.*

II. **The Inquiry Meeting, which followed the Address.** — Vs. 37-40. FIRST: THE EFFECT OF THE SERMON. CONVICTION OF SIN. 37. **They were pricked,** κατενύγησαν; from κατά, *intensive,* and νύσσω, *to prick with a sharp point.* Hence, *they were pricked deeply, intensely, with the sharp point* of his discourse. **In their hearts.** Consciences, moral nature, as with a scorpion's sting, "as with a two-edged sword." "So, Homer, of the puncture of a spear; of horses *dinting* the earth with their hoofs, etc. Here, therefore, of the sharp painful emotion, the *sting* produced by Peter's words. Cicero, speaking of the oratory of Pericles, says that his speech left *stings* in the minds of his hearers (*De Oratore* III: 34)." — *Professor Vincent.* "No word could better make known that the sting of the last word had begun to work." — *Knowling.*

They saw that they had committed an awful crime against God and the nation and themselves. They were in danger of the judgment to come. They had rejected their best friend and Saviour. They had done despite to the Son of God. They felt as Dr. Bonar wrote: —

"I see the crowd in Pilate's hall,
I mark their wrathful mien,
Their shouts of "Crucify" appal,
With blasphemy between.

"And of that shouting multitude
I feel that I am one;
And in that din of voices rude,
I recognize my own.

"I see the scourges tear his back,
I see the piercing crown,
And of that crowd who smite and mock
I feel that I am one.

"Around yon cross the throng I see,
Mocking the Sufferer's groan;
Yet still my voice it seems to be,
As if I mocked alone."

CONVICTION OF SIN (1) leads men to seek the Saviour. If one does not feel guilty, why should he seek forgiveness? If one imagines he is well, why should he go to the physician? (2) The greatest means for the conviction of sin is a view of Jesus Christ, and him crucified. His perfect life shows us the imperfection of ours. That he should come from heaven to suffer and die to save us proves the exceeding evil and danger of sin. (3) The presence and power of the Holy Spirit make these means effective. For men may know they are sinful, and not feel it, or seek to escape. They may excuse themselves and be utterly careless under the most vivid presentation of Christ, and the most fervent appeals.

SECOND: THE INQUIRY. **Men and brethren.** Apparently the meeting broke up into fragments, and different persons not only asked publicly of the speaker, but held conversation with the apostles and other disciples who mingled with the crowd. **What shall we**

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38. Then / And Pē'ter said / said unto them, [1] Repent, ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jē'sus Christ for / unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Hō'ly Ghōst.

39. For the promise is unto you, / to you is the promise, and [2] to your children, and [3] to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him.

[1] Luke 24: 47; Acts 3: 19. [2] Joel 2: 28; Acts 3: 25. [3] Acts 10: 45; 11: 15, 18; Eph. 2: 13.

do? The sin had been committed; the penalty overhung them. They could not undo the deed. What could they do in reference to it? How could they themselves escape from their guilt; how could they ward off the doom of their nation! Their guilt, as to this deed, awakened their conscience as to other sins, and made them feel the depth of their sinful character. Very often it occurs that some one overt act, with its train of consequences, reveals the sinful nature, and makes men cry out for salvation from all sin.

THIRD: THE ANSWER. The answer was threefold. 1. REPENTANCE. **38. Repent,** μετανοήσατε. "A word compounded of the preposition μετά, *after*, *with*, and the verb νοέω, to *perceive* and to *think*, as the result of perceiving or observing. In this compound the preposition combines the two meanings of *time* and *change*, which may be denoted by *after* and *different;* so that the whole compound means *to think differently after*. Μετάνοια (*repentance*) is therefore, primarily, an *after-thought*, *different* from the former thought; then, a *change of mind*, which issues in *regret* and in *change of conduct*." "*Sorrow* is not, as is popularly conceived, the primary nor the prominent notion of the word. Paul distinguishes between *sorrow* (λύπη) and *repentance* (μετάνοια), and puts the one as the outcome of the other. 'Godly *sorrow* worketh *repentance*' (2 Cor. 7: 10)." — *Prof. M. R. Vincent* in *Word Studies*. The word "repentance" means simply *change of mind*, the reversal of a man's controlling thoughts, feelings, and aims of life. Repentance, then, is the turning of the whole soul from self to God, and involves the breaking off from a selfish, sinful course of life, and the entrance upon a life of obedience, trust, and supreme devotion to God. — *Bible Reader's Commentary*.

NOTE the difference between resolving to do some single act, or to change some small purpose, or habit, and the resolve to change the great aim and purpose of the whole life.

2. FAITH IN JESUS as Lord and Saviour, — a faith which trusts the whole life to his guidance and control. This is implied in the requirement to be baptized.

3. BAPTISM. **And be baptized . . . in** (rather, *unto*, εἰς) **the name of Jesus Christ.** This was the rite by which they publicly confessed their acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah, their trust in him, and their consecration to his service. It was like taking an oath of allegiance when one becomes a citizen of a country.

TWO BLESSINGS were promised to those who should comply with these requirements. 1. **For** (unto) **the remission of sins,** εἰς ἄφεσιν; from εἰς, *unto*, as the end to be reached; ἄφεσιν, from ἀφίημι, *to send away*, *to discharge*. The *sins* are *sent away*, the *debt* is *discharged*, and the *sinner* is *discharged* as from bondage or from the court and place of punishment. Here was the way in which their guilt, on account of which their consciences were disturbed, could be removed. Sins are remitted, first, by forgiveness, taking away the penalty, and treating the sinner as if he had not sinned; and second, by taking away sin itself, the disposition to sin, the love of sin, the practise of sin. Men are saved, "not *in* sin, but *from* sin."

COMPARE by way of contrast as to the way, and of comparison as to joy, Moore's "Paradise and the Peri," who

> "At the gate
> Of Eden stood disconsolate."

2. The other blessing was, **ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost,** sometimes in the same form in which they had just seen it manifested; and always in his abiding presence, dwelling within them as a fountain of life (John 7: 38), as the Comforter, teaching, guiding, inspiring, helping, purifying, giving peace and hope and joy, according to the promise (John 13–16).

39. **For the promise,** of the Messiah, and of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and of salvation as foretold by Joel (vs. 16–21) and other prophets. It included all the hopes and blessings which the Messiah was to bring. **Is unto you,** in spite of your sins, and your crucifying the Messiah. He was the expression of God's love to you. He died that you might be saved. Therefore he wants to save you. The promise is yours. **And to**

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40. And with many other words did he testify testified, and exhort exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward crooked generation.

41. Then they They then were added *unto them* unto *them* in that day that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there there were added about three thousand souls.

your children. No one wants to be saved alone. Your being saved from sin is the nearest and surest way to the salvation of your children, all down the ages. **And to all that are afar off.** All Gentile nations. The *near* are Jews, the *afar off*, Gentiles (Isa. 57: 19; Zech. 6: 15; Eph. 2: 13, 17). **Even as many as the Lord our God shall call.** The Greek word implies that the call is "unto him" (R. V.). It does not declare that every one who is called accepts the call, but that this promise is for all, Jews and Gentiles. It reaches as far as the invitation. None are called to less than this; and all that are called may claim this promise as theirs. God's welcomes are heart-felt, warm, earnest, sincere, wide-reaching, all-inclusive. No one is left out. No one is too far away.

FOURTH: AN EXHORTATION. **40. And with many other words,** with every persuasive argument, presented in every attractive form. **Did he testify,** bear witness that the promise was being fulfilled from his own experience of what Jesus had taught and done, proving him to be the Messiah. **Save yourselves,** by repenting and believing on Jesus. **From this untoward,** intractable, perverse. "Toward" is to-ward, inclined towards; hence, *gentle, docile;* as "froward" is from-ward, turned from, averse. The **untoward generation** was one turned away from God and from the right. They were to save themselves from the influences and from the condemnation that were coming upon that generation. The R. V. has "crooked" instead of *untoward*. This "signifies perversity in turning off from the truth." — *Knowling*.

NOTE. One of the chief dangers to which the new disciples were exposed came from their environment, from the perverse generation which surrounded them. They had to resist these plausible and cunning and powerful men, to break away from false doctrine, defy selfish authority, to forsake old friends, to endure derision, hatred, and persecution. This was no small thing to do. It acted as a sieve to sift out false disciples, and keep the church sincere and pure.

III. **Joining the Church.** — V. 41. 1. WHO. **41. They that gladly received his word.** The R. V. omits *gladly*, as do the oldest MSS. All who received the word were baptized, but doubtless they did it gladly, freely, joyfully. It was the most joyful act of their lives. Compulsory religion is no religion. It was esteemed a great *privilege* to be a Christian. The people were enthusiastic on the subject. "Receiving the word" implies that they received Jesus as their Messiah, Lord, and teacher; they committed themselves to serve him, to obey his teachings, to live according to the principles of his kingdom, to devote themselves to the task of carrying out the mission of the Christ.

2. HOW. **Were baptized,** not necessarily on the day in which they believed, nor by the apostles alone.

BAPTISM is (1) the appointed method of making a profession of religion, and, therefore, every disciple of Christ should be baptized. No one can find a simpler, a more significant, or better method of confessing Christ. Jesus himself was baptized, as an example to all his followers. (2) Baptism is a public renunciation of sin, and profession of cleansing by the blood of Jesus Christ. It is a perfect symbol of the putting away of the defilement of sin, and of the cleansing of heart and life. (3) It is a symbol of the new, the risen life with Christ Jesus. (4) It is a symbol of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

CONFESSION OF CHRIST is (1) a duty commanded by Christ, and therefore not to be omitted with impunity. It is binding on all. (2) It is a test of faith and obedience. A faith that is not willing to confess publicly the Saviour is not strong enough or of the right kind to save the soul. (3) Public confession confirms and strengthens the disciple. It commits him to the side of Christ. It is like taking out naturalization papers, or enlisting in the army. It is Cortez's burning the ships that brought his army to Mexico; there is no retreat. It is like wearing the white ribbon, or the blue; people expect you to live up to your principles. (4) It gives power over the world; it is a continual sermon, proclaiming the gospel, and testimony that you believe Christ. (5) It is a means of organization and unity and fellowship, adding greatly to power and usefulness. A thousand separate individuals are weakness itself, compared with a regiment or an organization of a thousand men.

3. HOW MANY. **There were added,** to the number of Christians. **Three thousand souls.** This was a glorious beginning for the new church. The numbers added

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42. [1] And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' [doctrine / teaching] and fellowship, [and] in [the] breaking of bread and [in the] prayers.

[1] V. 46; Acts 1: 14; Rom. 12: 12; Eph. 6: 18.

greatly to the power of the movement. Each person was a center of influence. Three thousand burning and shining lights were scattered over the city. There are some great advantages in a slow and steady growth. There are other and great advantages in powerful revivals, which impress a community in a way that the same number unfolding like the lilies of spring could not do.

IV. **The Church Beautiful. An Ideal for all the Ages.** — Vs. 42–47. FIRST: TRAINING IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. As Hugh Miller shows in his book, *My Schools and Schoolmasters*, the processes of his education and growth, so here we see the way in which the young converts of the early church were educated into a large and full Christian life.

1. BY INSTRUCTION. 42. **And they continued stedfastly,** προσκαρτεροῦντες (from πρός, *to*, and καρτερὸς, *strong*), *adhering strongly to, persisting* against all adverse influences. It is steady, persistent work that tells. No one can be a good scholar who is fitful and irregular in his attendance at school. **In the apostles' doctrine,** *i. e.*, the "teaching" of the apostles in the truths of their religion, and in the words and life of Jesus, and in the practical duties of religion. Teaching implies something taught, and that is doctrine. One of the best marks of a Christian life is the desire to learn. Conversion wakes up the mind as well as the conscience. They went to school to the apostles. They would be intelligent Christians, because thus they would (*a*) be better themselves, (*b*) be kept from error, (*c*) be fitted to spread the gospel to others.

The whole body of Christians should attend the TEACHING SERVICES of the church. The Sunday school should be the Bible school for all. Christianity is the natural ally of learning.

"The riches of our Commonwealth
Are free, strong minds, and hearts of health;
And more to her than gold or grain,
The cunning hand and cultured brain.

"Nor heeds the sceptic's puny hands,
While near her school the church spire stands;
Nor fears the blinded bigot's rule,
While near her church spire stands the school."
—*J. G. Whittier* in *Our State.*

ILLUSTRATION. The Persian princes, according to Xenophon, had for their teachers the wisest man, the bravest man, the most temperate man, and the most just man in the kingdom. We have all four in the most perfect degree in our one teacher, Jesus Christ.

2. BY FELLOWSHIP AND PERSONAL INFLUENCE, — through working together, studying together, mutual sympathy and help. **And fellowship,** κοινωνίᾳ (from Κοινός, *common*), which is the Latin *communis* (from *con*, "together," and *munia*, "service"), "function," "duty together" (or from *com*, "together," and the root *mu*, "to bind") "bound together," hence, "belonging to all."

The disciples were like one loving family. "May not a good parallel be found in Phil. 1: 5, where *fellowship*, whilst it signifies cooperation in the widest sense, including fellowship in sympathy, suffering, and toil, also indicates the special and tangible manifestation of this fellowship in the ready almsgiving and contributions of the Philippian church." — *Knowling.* Personal influence is one of the strongest factors in education, in the formation of character, and the guidance of life. No hermit life can be as effective in Christian growth and usefulness as a life of fellowship with the true saints.

3. BY THE ORDINANCES, AND ESPECIALLY THE LORD'S SUPPER. **In breaking of bread.** This is the New Testament phrase for the Lord's Supper, in remembrance of Jesus, a new consecration to his service, a new inspiration of love. The sacrament was probably administered in connection with every evening meal partaken by the disciples in common, probably following the meal, as the institution of the Lord's Supper followed the Passover meal.

4. BY PRAYER-MEETINGS. **And in prayers.** R. V., "the" prayers. Of course, they prayed in secret; but this, doubtless, refers to praying together; "united prayer at fixed hours in some appointed place." — *Rendall.* No one can grow in grace without praying in secret, but there are helps and blessings which come from united prayer which the other cannot give.

ILLUSTRATIONS. So with several pieces of wood on the fire, each one burns brighter on account of the others, as a harmony in music produces effects which no solo, however good, can produce. Two are more than twice one. *One* alone is a color, *several* together make the pictured window of a cathedral. *One* is a sound, *several* are an anthem.

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43. And fear came upon every soul: and [1] many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

44. And all that believed were together, and [2] had all things common;

45. And they and sold their possessions and goods, and [3] parted them to all, men, according as every any man had need.

[1] Mark 16: 17; Acts 4: 33; 5: 12. [2] Acts 4: 32. [3] Isa. 58: 7.

SECOND: CHRISTIAN DEEDS EXPRESSING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE (VS. 43-45). 1. MIRACLES BY THE APOSTLES. **43. And fear.** Reverential awe in the presence of the mysterious power, working such wonders of grace and love. Only very dull or very wicked people could help feeling this awe. It doubtless terrified men who knew the evil of their lives but would not repent, like Macbeth, who "retained enough of goodness to make him a haggard, miserable criminal; never enough to restrain him from crime." For they "must serve the devil as slaves, if they will not decide to serve God as freemen." — *Prof. E. Dowden, LL.D.* They feared God, and therefore feared nothing else. **Many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.** This general description includes the miracles described more in detail in subsequent chapters (Acts 3: 1–8; 5: 12, 15, 16). The term "wonders" refers to their effect on the minds of eye-witnesses; "signs," to the purpose which they were intended to serve as proofs of the divine mission (John 5: 36; 10: 25; Heb. 2: 4). — *Cook.* Thus the apostles proved themselves the true successors of their Master, by doing the same kind of deeds in his name, illustrating the Gospels, and by realizing the promise Jesus gave them that they should be able to do great miracles. The greatest of all miracles was the conversion of three thousand in a day, and the change made in these men. Such great marvels still follow the preaching of the gospel.

2. GREAT DEEDS OF CHARITY AND LOVE BY ALL THE DISCIPLES. **44. And all that believed were together.** They had one central home; they "constituted a social community by themselves, separated from the rest of the people, not by local and physical barriers, but by their own mutual sympathies." **And had all things common.** They were members of one family and held things in common just as members of a family do. Everything was for the good of all. No one "said that anything was his own," but all was for the use of friends and of any Christian who had need.

45. And sold their possessions (real estate) **and goods** (personal property) in order to be able to impart **them to all men, as every man had need.** All did not give away everything they had, for then they would have been compelled to ask some of it back again. But everything was free. Rich and poor were alike. There was need of this, for there were many strangers away from home, and they needed to remain awhile where they could earn nothing, in order to be trained and educated and filled with the new spirit, so that they could be prepared to witness to the gospel in their distant homes. Others, like the apostles, had to be supported while they gave themselves up wholly to preaching and spreading the gospel.

THE COMMUNITY OF GOODS. 1. The circumstances at this time at Jerusalem were peculiar, because there were great numbers of strangers there without means of support, and it was wise for them to remain for a time.

2. "Renan and Pfleiderer alike have recognized the beauty of St. Luke's picture, and of the social transformation which was destined to renew the face of the earth, which found its pattern of serving and patient love in Jesus, the friend of the poor, whose brotherhood opened a place of refuge for the oppressed, the destitute, the weak, who enjoyed in the mutual love of their fellows a foretaste of the future kingdom of God in which God himself will wipe all tears from their eyes." — *Knowling.*

3. "The daily ministration in Acts 6: 1 seems to show that no equal distribution of property was intended; the act of Barnabas was apparently one of charity rather than of communism." — *Knowling.* "The case of Ananias and Sapphira clearly shows that the whole thing was voluntary, not required, while in communism in the strict sense no room is left for individual generosity. The fact that Barnabas is especially commended for selling his field also suggests that such generosity was uncommon." — *McGiffert.*

4. The account in the Acts plainly implies that the possession of property did not cease among Christians, as we learn from the story of Ananias and Sapphira, and the fact that "some fourteen years later (Acts 12: 12) we find Mary, the mother of John Mark, — evidently a person of consideration and authority in the church, — possessing a house of her own in the city." Mnason would seem to have possessed a house in Jerusalem (Acts

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46. [1] And they, day by day, continuing daily stedfastly with one accord [2] in the temple, and [3] breaking bread from house to house. at home, they did eat take their meat food with gladness and singleness of heart,

47. Praising praising God, and [4] having favour with all the people. And [b] the Lord added [a] to the church daily such as should be them day by day those that were being saved.

[1] Acts 1: 14.
[2] Luke 24: 53; Acts 5: 42.
[3] Acts 20: 7.
[4] Luke 2: 52; Acts 4: 33; Rom. 14: 18.
[5] Acts 5: 14.
a Greek, *together*.

21: 16); Tabitha helped the poor from her own resources; Paul urges the disciples to give as they are prospered; there is no implication that Barnabas sold all that he had.

5. "The principle underlying Christian communism, viz., that all possessing goods and industries are to be consecrated to God in the service of humanity, is a fundamental Christian principle (Matt. 25: 14–30; Luke 13: 6-9), but neither experience nor Scripture indicates that selling all and dividing to the poor is the best method calculated to serve humanity, or even the poor." — *Abbott*. Christian love and Christian principles are to abolish poverty and want, and spread the gospel over the earth, and we are to live daily according to the brotherly principle exemplified in this early church "where the poor man knew no shame, the rich no haughtiness."

THIRD: WORSHIP. (1) **46. In the temple,** the one natural and national place of worship. The Christians did not reject the temple worship, but filled it full of spirit and meaning. So Jesus went into his Father's house. The gospel was not opposed to the temple and its services any more than a rose is opposed to the stem that holds it, or the new shoot to the acorn from which it springs. (2) "At home." **And breaking bread.** See on v. 42. It was the common meal, eaten together, and closing with the Lord's Supper. **From house to house.** Or, "at home," as in the R. V. See Edersheim's *Jewish Social Life*, pp. 259, 260.

FOURTH: CHARACTERISTICS. **Did eat their meat,** *i. e.*, took their food, their ordinary meals.—*Cambridge Bible*. **With gladness,** Greek, *exulting*, *abounding joy*. The gospel pervades the whole life with gladness. Gloom is not the fruit of religion, but of sin and disease; every heavenly emotion and act is joyous in its nature. They were glad of the goodness of God which provided the food. Every good gift was a mark of God's love to them. They were glad because they had enough to give to others. They enjoyed the food more by enjoying it together with hearts of love, with "the feast of reason and the flow of soul" concerning the spiritual blessings of God. **Singleness of heart,** ἀφελότητι, from ἀ, *not*, and φελλεύς, *stony or rocky ground;* hence, *plain*, *smooth*, *straightforward*, opposite to *deceit*, *hypocrisy* or *crooked ways*. The corresponding adjective was used to describe a *smooth* road, free from stones. The word "denotes evenness of temper, unruffled cheerfulness in social intercourse." It "marked a harmony of Christian life undisturbed by discord or unkindness." — *Rendall*. "Every feeling is excluded which could mar the picture of exquisite but childlike happiness."

47. **Praising God.** "The praise refers not merely to their thanksgivings at meals, but is characteristic of their whole devotional life, both in public and private." — *Knowling*.

ILLUSTRATION. GRUMBLE CORNER AND THANKSGIVING STREET. At a camp-meeting in South Framingham, a man arose and said that he formerly lived in Grumble Corner, but had lately moved up to Thanksgiving Street, where the air was fresher, the sunshine brighter, the neighbors pleasanter.

And having favour with all the people, in contrast with the ecclesiastics. Like Jesus in his youth, having favor with God and man, so the youthful church was in favor with God and man. Their joyous graces, their generous living, their noble lives, were attractive.

LIBRARY. Earle's *Bringing in the Sheaves* has two incidents of the power of Christian joy. Trench's *Poems*, "Rejoice Evermore," and "The Monk and the Bird." The *Life of President Jonathan Edwards* describes his remarkable joy in his early Christian experience. "Be such a man, live such a life, that if every man were such as you, and every life a life like yours, this earth would be a paradise." — *Phillips Brooks*.

ILLUSTRATION. The Palace Beautiful of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is the most perfect picture of the church and its ordinances, in all literature. The lions in the way before coming; the porter, Watchful, welcoming the pilgrim at the door; the examination by the gentle maidens, Piety, Prudence, and Charity, with their discourse at the supper; the

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sleeping in the Chamber of Peace; the study of the records of the place; the vision of the Delectable Mountains; and the putting-on the armor for future warfare — make altogether a fitting picture of the "house built by the Lord of the hill, for the relief and security of pilgrims."

POEM. Mrs. Preston's "The Ideal becomes the Real."

And God shall make divinely real
The highest form of thy ideal.

FIFTH: THE FRUITS. **And the Lord** Jesus **added** to them, to the number of the disciples. **To the church** is omitted in the R. V., because omitted from the best manuscripts. But the meaning is the same. **Such as should be saved.** Better such as "were being saved," or "were saving" themselves "from this untoward generation," as Peter had exhorted them to do.

LESSON IV. — January 26.

THE LAME MAN HEALED. — Acts 3: 1-10.

Study Verses 1-16. Read Acts 3.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation.*** — EX. 15: 2.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Recall the beautiful picture of the early church presented in our last lesson.

Two Effects necessarily follow. One we saw at the close of the last chapter. The changed character, the peace, the joy, the great generosity, the uplifting of the lives of the disciples into a heavenly sphere, attracted many of the people. It was what they needed and longed for. It awakened their souls. It filled them with new life.

The other effect was opposition from those whose character and lives were reproved, but who did not want to change them; and from those whose lives and fortunes and power depended on the continuance of the old.

Compare the effect of hot iron in cold water.

Compare wild scenery being transformed into a beautiful park; or a field broken up in order to build a palace.

One Miracle was selected from the many wrought, because of its far-reaching influence extending nearly through Acts 3 and 4, a bird's-eye view of which should be given.

1. It produced opposition.
2. That opposition strengthened the character of the church and increased its numbers.

THE SECTION

includes the whole chapter.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. Some afternoon in June, A. D. 30; or not very long thereafter.

Place. Jerusalem, in the outer court of the temple, near the Beautiful Gate, which led from the outer court into the Court of the Women.

LESSON OUTLINE.

General introduction as above.

SUBJECT: A Living Parable of Redemption.

I. ONE OF THE PENTECOSTAL MIRACLES (vs. 1-10).

SCENE I. Peter and John on the Way to the Temple.
SCENE II. The Lame Man carried to the Gate Beautiful.
SCENE III. The Meeting of the Three.
SCENE IV. The Healing of the Lame Man.
SCENE V. The Saved Man.

II. PETER'S SERMON EXPLAINING AND APPLYING THE MIRACLE (vs. 11-16).

1. The audience.
2. The text.
3. The source of the healing.
4. The means of salvation, — Faith.
5. Jesus is the promised Messiah.
6. Therefore repent.
7. Scripture proof.
8. Closing exhortation.

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PICTURES.

Peter and John at the Beautiful Gate, Raphael (South Kensington); ideal portraits of Peter in Titian's *Tribute Money*, and in Palma's *Peter Enthroned* (at Venice); *St. Peter curing the Cripple*, Masaccio (Florence).

PLACE IN THE HISTORY.

One of the miracles wrought under the influence of Pentecost. The connecting link between the new church and the persecution.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

In addition to the *Commentaries* and books on *The Apostolic Age*, see Professor Briggs' *The Messiah of the Apostles*; H. C. Trumbull's *Studies in Oriental Social Life*, "Calls for Healing in the East"; A. J. Gordon's *Ministry of Healing*; Edersheim's *The Temple and its Services*. On the "Beautiful Gate," see Phillips Brooks' *Sermons* on this story; Lightfoot's *Horæ Hebraicæ* (Acts 3: 2).

1. Now Pē'ter and Jŏhn [were going] up [together][1] into the temple at the hour of prayer, [2]*being* the ninth *hour*.

2. And [3]a certain man [that was] lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the [gate] door of the temple which is called Beautiful, [4]to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;

[1] Acts 2: 46.
[2] Psa. 55: 17.
[3] Acts 14: 8.
[4] John 9: 8.

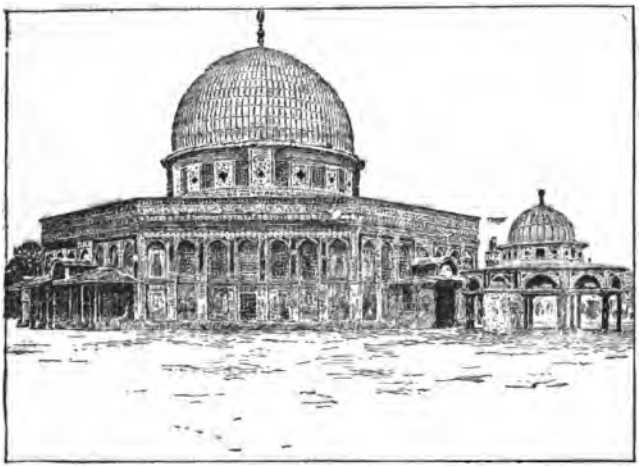
I. **One of the Pentecostal Miracles.**—Vs. 1–10. SCENE I. *In the afternoon, between two and three o'clock. Peter and John on the Way to the Temple.* 1. **Now Peter and John.** Two chiefest among the apostles, and most advanced in the knowledge of Jesus. "The eldest and the youngest, probably of the noble twelve." They were old friends at Bethsaida, and partners in the fishing business on the Sea of Galilee (Luke 5: 10). They were both disciples of John the Baptist. Both had followed Jesus almost from the first. Both were with him on the Mount of Transfiguration, and within the gates of Gethsemane. Widely different in character, they were closest of friends, alike in principle, devotion, and purpose. They were like different notes in a harmony, different instruments in an orchestra, different colors in the spectrum. **Went up.** "Were going up" as in R. V. From their homes, or some meeting-place of the disciples, they ascended the temple hill, and were going up from one terrace to another in the temple courts. For each inner court was on a higher level than the adjoining outer one. They had come **into the temple.** That is, into the great Court of the Gentiles, and were crossing toward the Court of the Women, which, according to Kitto, "was the common place for worshipers, both men and women." It was the custom of the early Christians to worship in their old accustomed way, as well as in the new ways taught them by the Spirit. If they broke "the old bottles" before the new were prepared, they would lose the very spirit and power of worship. As it was, they filled the old forms full of the spirit of worship. **At,** ἐπί, *for*. So as to be there at **the hour of prayer.** The hours of incense and of sacrifice were hours of prayer. See Luke 1: 9, 10, where it is said that the people were praying while the priest offered the incense. **Being the ninth hour.** Or about three o'clock in the afternoon, the hour of the evening sacrifice.

ROUTINE AND SPIRIT. The spiritual life is not confined to routine, but at times bursts all such bounds. And yet regular hours of worship and prayer and reading of the Bible are a great help toward a high, spiritual daily life, just as regular hours for meals are best for bodily health. The author of *Blessed be Drudgery* shows how valuable in the discipline of life is regular, compulsory routine. Habits may become a chain, but they also may become a golden stairway to heaven. See the article "Habit," in Professor James' *Psychology*.

SCENE II. *The Lame Man carried to the Gate Beautiful.* 2. **And a certain man lame.** All we know of his history is (1) that he was born with the cause of his lameness, making the cure more wonderful; (2) that it was caused by a weakness of the feet and ankles (v. 7); (3) that it was so bad that he could not walk, but had to be carried; (4) that he was poor; (5) that he was over 40 years old (Acts 4: 22) **Was carried.** "The man was being carried at the hour of worship, when the temple would be filled with worshipers." — *Knowling*. And they were in the act of carrying him at the time Peter and John were going in. The two arrivals were coincident. **Whom they laid.** Were

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3. Who seeing Pē'ter and Jŏhn about to go into the temple, asked to receive an alms.



From a Photograph by Wilson.

Mosque of Omar, Site of Solomon's Temple.

accustomed to lay. **At the gate of the temple.** Not the sacred building, but the sacred enclosure, including the courts. **Which is called Beautiful.** No gate of this name is mentioned by other writers. It may have been the Shushan gate, from the outside on the east, into the Court of the Gentiles, through Solomon's porch; or it was a popular name given to the magnificent doors of Corinthian brass described by Josephus (*Jewish Wars* V. 5, 3), leading from the Court of the Gentiles into the Court of the Women, which was reserved for the ordinary religious offices of the Jewish people. "The folds of this brazen gate were seventy-five feet high and sixty broad, and were covered with plates of gold and silver." — *Hackett.* See Wright's *Some New Testament Problems.* Every one on the continent of Europe has noticed how much expense and beauty have been lavished on doorways and gates. Michael Angelo said of the splendid bronze doors of the Baptistery at Florence, that they were fit to be the gates of paradise. See Psa. 24: 7. The expensive architecture of ancient gates is seen in the enormous gates of Karnak, in Egypt, and in the Propylæon, at Athens. The gates of the temple were made so beautiful and magnificent, in order to attract men, and to express the greater glories within, and "to symbolize the entrance into heaven." **To ask alms.** *Alms* is singular number, and was in early times spelt *almesse*, which is derived from the Greek, *eleēmosúnē* (the word used here), which in German becomes *almosen* — a gift of charity. — *Cambridge Bible.* **Of them that entered into the temple.** The kindest and most sympathetic people in the world are praying people. Persons who obey the first table of the law are most likely to obey the second. Nine tenths of all the money raised for benevolent purposes, and for the support of our charitable institutions, comes from the pockets of those who go "up to the temple at the hour of prayer."

Giving is a part of worship, one way of expressing love and devotion to God. It was once proposed in our ministers' meeting to apply to the collections in church the formula that was formerly used after passing the bread and the wine, — "If any one has been omitted in the passing of the (boxes) he will please manifest it by rising."

THE GATE BEAUTIFUL. There are many beautiful gates in life to higher and better things. The Gate of Hope, the Gate of Love, the Gate of Character, the Gate of Faithfulness, the Gate of Prayer. Jesus Christ is the Beautiful Gate to eternal life.

The temple of religion has a beautiful gate in it; but in one important respect it differs from the beautiful gate of the Jewish temple. On the pillars on either side of that gate were engraved in Greek letters the words, *Let no stranger pass beyond this on pain of death.* But through the beautiful gate of the gospel every one is free to enter into the holiest place. And that at all times.

SCENE III. *The Meeting of the Three* (vs. 3–5). **3. Who seeing Peter and John.** As these were well-known men frequenting the temple where this man was wont to be brought, it would seem that he must have known something about them. **About to**

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4. And Pē'ter, fastening his eyes upon him, with Jŏhn, said, Look on us.
5. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something [of] from them.
6. [Then] But Pē'ter said, Silver and gold have I none; but [such as] what I have, [that] give I thee: [1] In the name of Jē'sus Chrīst of Năz'a-rĕth, [rise up and] walk.
7. And he took him by the right hand, and [lifted him] raised him up: and immediately his feet [ancle bones] his ankle-bones received strength.

[1] Acts 4: 10.

go into the temple. From the noisy Court of the Gentiles into the inner courts with the worshipers.

4. **And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him.** *Fastening*, ἀτενίσας, is from τείνω, *to stretch*, and α, *intensive*, and means *to fasten the eyes* on anything with tense attention. Our word "attention" has the same literal meaning. Peter looked at the man with intense gaze, as if to see into his very soul, whether he was one in whom faith could be awakened, and to whom it would be wise and safe to impart the blessing of healing. It has been said that no faith was required of the lame man, but the call to rise and walk, in the name of Jesus, was a test of faith, and the man's acting upon Peter's word was an act of faith. **Look on us.** Calling his attention to what they were about to do, and awakening faith and obedience. He probably knew something of the divine power working through them, and was thus ready to believe in their Master.

5. **And he gave heed.** Because their intense gaze showed him that they had more than a hasty gift. He probably knew something of the generosity of the Christians described in the last chapter. So the Israelite bitten by the fiery serpents looked upon the brazen serpent held up for his healing (Num. 21: 9. See Isa. 45: 22).

NOTE the guiding providence of God, and how great the outcome of this seemingly accidental meeting. Every life is full of these providences. A very small thing has changed the whole course of our lives. The career of the famous preacher F. W. Robertson was changed by the barking of a dog. See E. E. Hale's story of "Hands Off" in his *Christmas in a Palace*. Condensed in *Suggestive Illustrations* on Acts, p. 417.

SCENE IV. *The Healing of the Lame Man* (vs. 6, 7). 6. **Then.** Better "but." **Silver and gold have I none.** Peter had left all to follow Jesus, and was dependent on others for his support, as Jesus had commanded (Matt. 10: 9). The statement shows that the apostles had not enriched themselves by the generosity of the new converts, but joined with them in their benevolence. No one had given up more for Jesus than they; but they asked for themselves no more than the most obscure believer. **But such as I have give I thee.** The presence of the Holy Spirit, the power to heal in Jesus' name, the knowledge of salvation and eternal life, the power to show the way of peace and joy, and the loving-kindness of the heavenly Father. The great works of the gospel cannot be done by silver and gold. They cannot give peace, or comfort, healing of body or soul, forgiveness of sins, the love of God, salvation, character, or any of the best things. The men who have done the most for the world have not been known for their riches. Jesus was poor, and Paul, and Luther, and the Wesleys, and Milton, Homer, Socrates, Dante. Peter had greater gifts to bestow than if he had possessed "the wealth of Ormus or of Ind," or had "Affluent Fortune emptied all her horn" into his cup. **In the name.** The name expresses the whole being, — his character, powers, and heart. **Of Jesus Christ.** As the efficient cause, as the real living giver. Christ healed in his own name, the apostles in Christ's name. Because this expressed the real facts of the case. And because if the apostles worked miracles in their own name, it would have drawn attention to themselves, and not to the Saviour; while now, both Jesus and the apostles pointed men to the Messiah, and thus to God. **Of Nazareth.** This is added to make perfectly clear to whom he referred. This one, so despised by the Jews, proves himself to be the Messiah, and to be now living, by doing now the same works he had done when in the flesh. **Rise up and walk.** The R. V., as in the best MSS., has simply "walk." "This, at the first view, might have seemed an absurd command. For the cripple might have readily objected, Why hast thou not first given me legs and feet? For this is a plain mock, when as thou biddest a man without feet to go." — *Calvin*. "But the man understood the words aright; for they were interpreted to him by the tingling life that, as they were uttered, rushed triumphantly into his dead limbs." — *Kitto*.

7. **And he took him by the right hand.** To strengthen his faith, to encourage the

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8. And [he] [1] leaping up, [he] stood, and [began to walk]; and [he] entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

[1] Isa. 35: 6.

man to make the needed effort, and to help him to use his feet in rising and standing, for one has to learn the art of standing and walking even when he has strength to do it. It is said of Kaspar Hauser, who was confined in a German prison from birth till he was 17 years old, that when he first came out he could not walk without stumbling. — *R. R. Doherty, Ph.D.* The man's faith was strengthened by the miracles the apostles had already wrought, and by the marvelous change in those who had become Christians, and the gift on Pentecost. Perhaps he recalled stories of healing by Jesus, as in John 5: 2–14. The Holy Spirit wrought directly on his soul. **His feet and ancle bones received strength.** "The language denotes with medical precision the nature of the restoration; the tread gained muscular firmness; the ankle joints new strength and play." — *Rendall.*

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS. 1. Only such as a person has can he give to others. "Peter could work the miracle, because in *himself* had the miracle been wrought" by the Holy Spirit. We cannot kindle others unless we ourselves are on fire. Warm words without a warm heart leave us but "a mountain of ice in a sea of fire." If one has courage, hope, love, goodness, he can infuse them into other souls. If he himself is full of doubts, hate, ill-temper, bad passions, it is these he will impart to those around him, and by no means can such an one impart to others the good he has not himself. Hence it is that the most important element in teaching and in preaching is the man behind them. In the *Iliad* Homer makes an ugly, ill-tempered, sharp-tongued man deliver a speech against King Agamemnon, which in ink is one of the finest things in the *Iliad.* But it had no effect on the army, because of the character of the man that made it. "In engineering," says Dr. Gregg, "it is a rule that a cannon should be one hundred times heavier than its shot. A man's character should be a hundred times heavier than what he says." What would the teaching of Jesus have accomplished without his knowledge and power as the Son of God, and his perfect example of his own teaching. What a double motive is here for being good, and acquiring all spirituality and virtue, and, above all, for possessing the living Christ, that we may help others to know and love him.

2. This opportunity came to the apostles by the wayside, while they were on the way to another duty. Some of our best privileges and most useful hours come to us in this way, as rows of peach trees grew up by the roadside where the soldiers threw the stones of the peaches they had eaten, and as the straw, in which the artist Thorwaldsen's statues were packed, brought over from Rome the seeds of new flowers to adorn the gardens of Copenhagen. We are to be ever on the lookout for unexpected and wayside opportunities to do good, for they are often like the by-products, as of petroleum, sometimes worth more than the original product itself.

3. We are never shut out from the means of great usefulness because we have not much money. But the greater gifts cost the giver more than money, as it is harder to be than to do. Yet money may be used as an instrument through which the higher spirit works.

4. We learn from this incident something about the way God answers many of our prayers. "When God appears to refuse the objects which we desire, he gives us others that are better. If God were inclined to bestow no better gifts than those which we usually desire, we would never obtain his richest gifts." — *Starke.*

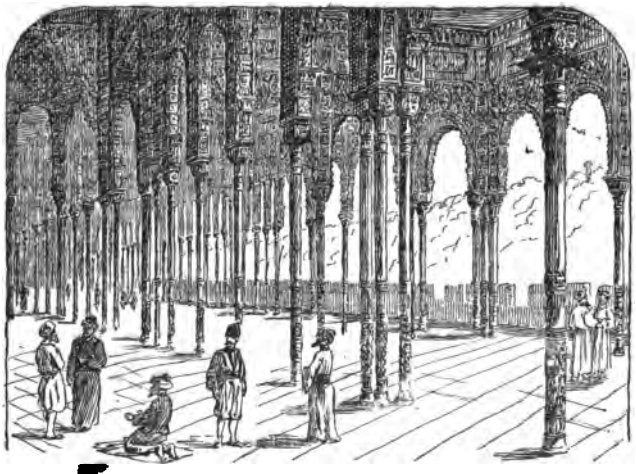
5. THE BEST GIFTS to the poor, or to any one, are not the exact things they want, but the power to obtain them; not merely a cup of water, but an overflowing fountain; not a basket of fruit, but a fruit tree; not mere money, but the power and opportunity to earn a living; not a definite amount of truth, but the means of searching for truth. This is now generally accepted as the best and most effective method of bestowing charity.

SCENE V. *The Saved Man* (vs. 8–10). **8. And he leaping up,** ἐξαλλόμενος; from ἐξ, *from, up,* and ἄλλομαι, *to spring up,* like water from a fountain (the second *leaping* used in this verse). The compound is used in medical language "of starting from sleep, or of the sudden bound of the pulse." He **stood,** first to get his balance, and then **walked. Entered with them into the temple.** That is, into the sacred enclosure, either from the outside into the Court of the Gentiles, through the Shushan gate, or into the Court of the Women from the Court of the Gentiles. At this hour, the time of the evening service of sacrifice, the courts of the temple would be full of worshipers. **Walking, and leaping.** "He never before put one foot before another, but now he walks and leaps. Perhaps the phrase may be meant to denote that the man's first efforts at the unknown art of progres-

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9. [1] And all the people saw him walking and praising God:
10. And [and] they knew [took knowledge of him], that it was he which [2] sat for alms at the Beautiful [Gate] of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

[1] Acts 4: 16, 21. [2] John 9: 8.



Solomon's Porch.

sion upon his feet was a peculiar movement, partly leaping and partly walking, as would, we imagine, have been natural under the circumstances. His first impulse would probably be to move *both* feet at once, and this would be *leaping;* but finding this was wrong, he would try to move his limbs alternately, and this was *walking.* The leaping may, however, have been a spontaneous act expressive of his gladness, and calculated to satisfy himself, and to show others that he was perfectly healed." — *Kitto.* **And praising God.** His first thought was to return thanks to God for his great deliverance. This shows that he was cured in soul as well as body. Praise is as natural to a child of God as his morning song to a bird; or the gushing of the waters to a fountain.

COMPARE the poem, "The Two Baskets"; one for petitions and one for praises. *Suggestive Illustrations* on Acts, p. 85.

9. **And all the people saw him.** The miracle was public, before crowds of people, and his ecstatic expressions of joy called their attention to him. "St. Chrysostom remarks that it was no less than if they saw Christ risen from the dead, to hear Peter saying, 'In the name,' etc.; and if Christ is not raised, how account for it, he asks, that those who fled whilst he was alive now dared a thousand perils for him when dead?" — *Knowling.* The change in Peter was as great a miracle as the change in the lame man.

10. **And they knew,** etc. They recognized, identified him. There was no mistake that this man who was walking and leaping was the very man who had been born lame. So that even the bitterest opposers were compelled to admit the fact (Acts 4: 16). They had seen him often, and his face was a familiar sight. **Filled with wonder,** θάμβους, "used from Homer downwards, of amazement allied to terror or awe." — *Knowling.* **Amazement,** ἐκστάσεως, from ἐκ, *out of,* and ἵστημι, to *put* or *place;* hence, *of a man put out of his senses, out of his normal condition; transported,* as with joy or wonder; *rapt,* from earthly things, *as in a trance.* Our word "ecstasy" is a transcript of the Greek. The great design of the miracle seems to have been to arouse the attention of the multitude, — to convert them into inquirers. As has been well said, "miracles are bells to call the people to worship." "Of course, over and above this, they are also the divine credentials of the messengers, — of those who are to conduct the worship." — *Gloag.*

A PARABLE OF REDEMPTION. This miracle is an acted parable of redemption; the helplessness and the need; the desire for bodily healing and help, leading to the spiritual; the gospel offering gifts beyond all silver or gold in value; the command in Jesus' name; the faith that led to obedience, and to doing what seemed impossible; the joy in the new-found life; the wonderful change; the amazement of the people.

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11. And as the lame man which was healed he held Pē'ter and Jŏhn, all the people ran together unto them in the porch [1] that is called Sŏl'o-mon's, greatly wondering.

12. And when Pē'ter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Is'ra-el, why marvel ye at this man, or why look fasten ye so earnestly your eyes on us, as though by our own power or holiness godliness we had made this man him to walk?

13. [2] The God of A'bră-hăm, and of I'saac, and of Jā'cob, the God of our fathers, [3] hath glorified his Son servant Jē'sus; whom ye [4] delivered up, and [5] denied him in the presence before the face of Pī'late, when he was had determined to let *him* go release him.

14. But ye denied [6] the Holy One 7 and the Just, and Righteous One, and desired asked for a murderer to be granted unto you;

15. And and killed the [a] Prince of life; [8] whom God hath raised from the dead; [9] whereof we are witnesses.

16. [10] And his name through faith in his name hath by faith in his name hath his name made this man strong, whom ye see behold and know: yea, the faith which is by through him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

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[1] John 10: 23; Acts 5: 12.
[2] Acts 5: 30.
[3] John 7: 39.
[4] Matt. 27: 2.
[5] Matt. 27: 20; Mark 15: 11; Luke 23: 18; John 18: 40; Acts 13: 28.
[6] Mark 1: 24; Luke 1: 35; Acts 2: 27.
[7] Acts 7: 52; 22: 14.
[8] Acts 2: 24.
[9] Acts 2: 32.
[10] Matt. 9: 22; Acts 4: 10.
a Or, *author*, Heb. 2: 10; 1 John 5: 11.

II. **Peter's Sermon explaining and applying the Miracle.** — Vs. 11-26.

1. THE AUDIENCE. *Crowds in Solomon's cloister in the Temple Court* (v. 11). 11. **Held Peter and John.** (1) In loving gratitude; (2) to show who had done such great things for him; (3) as a testimony that he accepted their Saviour and Master; (4) as a means of continued strength and grace. **Ran together.** After the regular service was over, returning through the Gate Beautiful, down its fifteen steps to the outer Court of the Gentiles, into **the porch that is called Solomon's.** A cloister extending along the eastern side, nearly six hundred feet. It was built on an artificial embankment which was the work of King Solomon; hence, perhaps the name. The porch was fifteen cubits (22 to 26 feet) wide, and its roof of cedar was supported by two rows of marble columns, twenty-five cubits (38 to 43 feet) high.

2. THE TEXT was the restored man standing by his side.

3. THE SOURCE OF THE HEALING (vs. 12-15). Peter declares the power does not lie in the apostles, as John the Baptist denied that he was the Christ. It would, indeed, be a marvel if by their (12) **own power or holiness** they **had made this man to walk.** The power came from Jesus, **the Prince of life,** whom they had rejected and killed, destroying their only hope of personal or national salvation. But their God, the God of their fathers and of their nation, raised him up from the dead, triumphing over their evil, and proving that he was the Messiah of their hopes, and again presenting him to them for their acceptance.

4. THE MEANS OF SALVATION WAS FAITH (vs. 16, 17). **16. Through faith in his name . . . the faith which is by him.** Salvation came to the lame man, and will come to you if you will believe and receive him. And there is hope, because **through ignorance ye did it.** "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

5. JESUS IS THE PROMISED MESSIAH (v. 18). You think he cannot be your Messiah because he was slain. But that is one proof that he is the Messiah, for your own prophets foretold it of him.

6. THEREFORE REPENT AND TURN AGAIN (vs. 19-21). In view of this truth and because thus your sins may be blotted out. And "so there may come seasons of refreshing" to you, of new spiritual life, not only in the future, but in the present, such as had just been witnessed, a foretaste of the visible and glorious presence when the Lord shall return in glory. Therefore repent, for there is coming a restoration of all things, the glorious Messianic times foretold by all the prophets who have spoken God's words from the beginning.

SCRIPTURE PROOF FOLLOWS (vs. 22-25). The Scriptures you believe declare this same

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truth, and foretell these days. They themselves warn you that if you neglect to obey your Messiah, you must perish. But now the promises are being fulfilled before your eyes.

CLOSING EXHORTATION (v. 26). Believe and repent, for God and his Son Jesus earnestly desire to bless you, and save you from your iniquities.

All this has a personal and pressing application to us.

" Blessed conviction that struggles within,
Blessed repentance that turns me from sin,
Blessed announcement that Jesus has died,
Blessed salvation through Calvary's tide,
Blessed assurance that God has forgiven,
Blessed condition I've started for heaven,
Blessed the service he gives me to do,
Blessed the blessedness all the way through ! "

LESSON V. — February 2.

THE FIRST PERSECUTION. — Acts 4 : 1–12.

Study Verses 1–22. Read Acts 4 : 1–31.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.* — ACTS 4: 12.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Place in the History. — This lesson is the natural outcome of the miracle, the teaching, and the widespread excitement described in our last lesson. It belongs to the early period of the church, not long after Pentecost.

The Two Kinds of Church Life. — Hitherto the progress of the church has been peaceful and rapid, presenting a beautiful picture of the heavenly life on earth.

Now begins a period of opposition and of troublous times; and victory over them and by means of them.

The Two Kinds of Hindrances. — One arising from outward opposition; the other from internal difficulties, described in Lessons VI. and VIII.

The Two Lines of Progress. — We now come to the place where we must watch the progress of the church from two points of view.

One is the outward history, flowing from the Pentecostal fountain in an ever-widening stream, blessing and refreshing the fields through which it flows; rising in resistless tide when rocks of opposition would stay its onward course.

The other is the inner history, the unfolding of the Spirit's work in the believers. From the fountain of the Holy Spirit given on Pentecost flowed a marvelous power, and that led to confession of sin and the obedience of faith, great peace, noble generosity, wonderful works of healing and help, a higher life beyond conception before this time, with all the fruits of the Spirit; and lastly, a marvelous wisdom and courage

LEARN BY HEART.

John 3: 16; Matt. 5: 10–12; Rev. 7: 13–17.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

These can be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

Cause of the opposition.
How the opposition aided the gospel.
The change in Peter.
The one way of salvation, and why.
The prayer-meeting.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: Progress through Opposition.

I. THE APOSTLES ARRESTED AND IMPRISONED (vs. 1–3).

By whom? For what purpose?
The effects of heroism in persecution with modern examples.

II. BUT THE WORK WENT ON (v. 4).

Five thousand men besides women and children.

III. OPPOSITION AIDED THE CAUSE BY GIVING THE GOSPEL A HEARING BEFORE THE RULERS (vs. 5–7).

IV. PETER PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO THE SANHEDRIM (vs. 8–12).

Characteristics of Peter's discourse.
Personal application. The one way of salvation.

V. THE OUTCOME (vs. 13–31).

Position of Peter unassailable.
The disciples acquitted.
The prayer-meeting that followed.

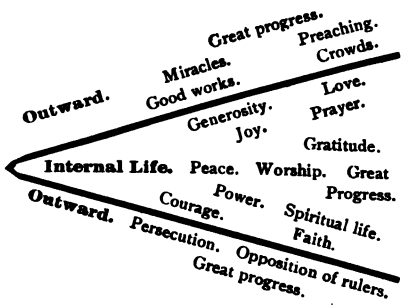
HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. The same afternoon in June as the last lesson, and the following morning.

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brought out by trying circumstances that was almost a transfiguration of the apostles from what they were before the crucifixion.

Teachers' Methods. — Perhaps some scholars may obtain a clearer idea and one more easily retained in the memory by means of a simple blackboard exercise.



Solomon's porch; a prison; the hall of the Sanhedrim; a room in Jerusalem where the disciples met.

Places.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

Farrar's *Texts Explained*, pp. 131–134; *Suggestive Illustrations* on Acts, pp. 95–114; Spurgeon's *Sermons in Candles*, pp. 121, 122, 165; Luther's experience as given in Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero Worship*, "The Hero as Priest"; "The Two St. Johns," by Stalker, in *The Apostolic Age;* Stifler's *Introduction to the Acts*, "Spiritual Guidance"; Pierson's *Acts of the Holy Spirit*, "Fulness and Boldness of the Spirit"; Dr. William M. Taylor's *Peter the Apostle*, Chap. 14; Lowell's *Poems*, "The Present Crisis"; article on "The Physical Basis of Courage," in *The Century* for June, 1888. On the Sanhedrim, there is an admirable and concise article in Schaff's edition of Herzog's *Cyclopedia* and in Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*.

1. And as they spake unto the people, the priests[1] and the *a* captain of the temple[1] and the Săd'du-cees[1] came upon them,

2. [1] Being grieved that being sore troubled because they taught the people, and preached through proclaimed in Jē'sus the resurrection from the dead.

[1] Matt. 22: 23; Acts 23: 8. *a* Or, *ruler*.

I. **The Apostles arrested and sent to Prison.** — Vs. 1–3. **1. And as they** (Peter and John) **spake unto the people** in Solomon's porch or cloister, a pillared portico open to the court of the temple. The well-known lame man had been healed, and was standing by the apostles, while Peter, taking the miracle as his text, had been preaching Jesus as the Messiah and Saviour. There was no little excitement about the matter. Peter was interrupted in his speech. **The priests**, whose temple services had been interfered with by the withdrawal of the crowds into another part of the temple, and their attraction to the strange event and the new teachings. The priests would naturally resent any usurpation of their place as the leaders of worship and instruction, and any lessening of their influence. **And the captain of the temple** was the captain of the guard of Levites and others, whose business was to protect the temple, prevent disorder and any interruption of the services. He was under the direction of the priests. **And the Sadducees.** These were rather a party than a sect. They did not believe in the future life, or angels or spirits or the resurrection, "but their real bond of union was political . . . they were supporters of the existing system in alliance with Roman authority, and monopolized public offices in the Sanhedrim, the priesthood, and the magistracy. . . . They were on principle bitterly opposed to the enthusiasm which Jesus had kindled, as a revolutionary force." — *Rendall.* "Josephus informs us that the high priestly families belonged to the Sadducean party." "They were the aristocratic priests occupying influential positions." — *Knowling.* **Came upon them.** Stood by them suddenly, while they were speaking to the people, and broke up the meeting.

2. Being grieved (διαπονούμενοι). Troubled through and through, vexed all through. This being the force of διά, *through*, in composition with the verb. **That they taught the people.** Different parties had different reasons for their displeasure. The temple police would avoid disorder and unauthorized gatherings. The priests were angry at the interference with their functions of worship and teaching; and the Sadducees, because the miracle and the preaching were a flat contradiction of their religious opinions, and favored their enemies, the Pharisees; and all because the growth of the new sect would interfere

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3. And they laid hands on them, and put *them* in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide.

with their worldly interests and peace. Their power, their wealth, their dues from the temple sacrifices, would be reduced. **Preached.** Proclaimed, published abroad. **Through Jesus.** Rather "in" Jesus, in the case of Jesus, by the fact of Jesus' resurrection (see on v. 12), that there is a **resurrection from the dead**, and, therefore, a future life, and a judgment to come.

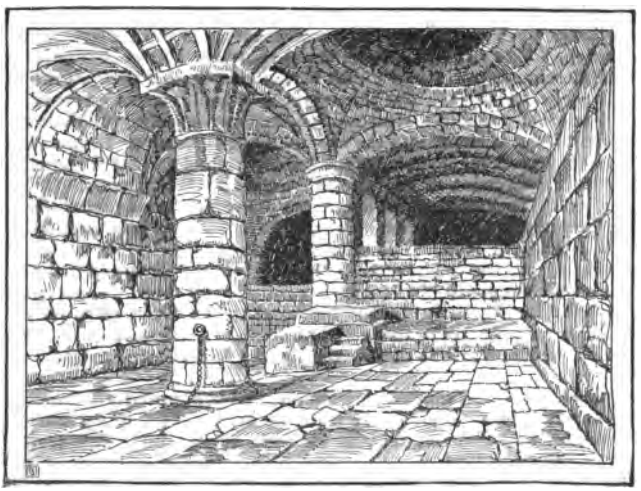
NOTE. "In the Gospels the Pharisees are represented as the great opponents of Christ; in the Acts it is the Sadducees who are the most violent opponents of the apostles. The reason of this seems to be that in the Gospels Jesus Christ came in direct collision with the Pharisees, by unmasking their hypocrisies, and endangering their influence among the people; whereas, the apostles, in testifying to the resurrection of Christ, opposed the creed of the Sadducees. Perhaps, also, in attacking the apostles, who taught the resurrection of that Jesus whom the Pharisees had persecuted and crucified, the Sadducees aimed an indirect blow at the favorite dogma of their rival sect." — *Gloag.*

3. **And they laid hands on them.** Arrested them. **Put them in hold,** *i. e.*, in prison. The word means "ward," under guard, and the place of custody. It was not a punishment, but a means of having them on hand for their trial. The man they had cured was probably with them (v. 14). **Unto the next day.** Because it was too late to assemble the Sanhedrim, who could not lawfully sit except by daylight. **Eventide.** Near six o'clock, for the preaching and other events must have taken some time since the healing of the lame man, about three o'clock P. M.

The two apostles were, doubtless, praying and praising God as Paul and Silas in the prison at Philippi (Acts 16: 25). Their hearts were being filled with the Spirit, with wisdom, courage, faith, and power. The prison was damp, dark, and chilly, but the apostles' hearts were warm, and filled with light.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS. 1. The fact that those interested in opposition to the truth are grieved at the success of the gospel is no reason why we should relax our efforts to spread its blessings. Liquor-sellers, gamblers, those who make money out of vice, those whose gains are by fraud, are always grieved at every effort to save men from them, but their grief should make us labor more earnestly and more hopefully.

2. The apostles now began to know the meaning of Christ's promised blessing to the persecuted. The first blast of a tempest had struck the infant church. It developed faith and courage and energy and devotion and love and joy in the apostles themselves. They were larger, stronger, nobler, better men than before; and it made known to the world the new power that was working in them.



Life of St. Paul. — *Lewin.*

Vestibule of the Southern Approach to the Temple.

3. Whenever the gospel becomes so well known and so strong in an evil world that it interferes with evil men and evil customs, then comes trouble. A sleeping or dead church awakens no opposition, but "the fires of persecution begin to kindle when the fires of the Spirit begin to burn." There is comfort and hope in perse-

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4. Howbeit (But) many of them which (that) heard the word believed; and the number of the men was (came to be) about five thousand.

cution and opposition, since it shows that the truth has power, and is alive, and is making itself felt. See Pliny's *Letters* X. 97.

ILLUSTRATION.

"Though the cause of Evil prosper, yet 'tis Truth alone is strong,
And, albeit she wander outcast now, I see around her throng
Troops of beautiful, tall angels, to enshield her from all wrong."
—*James Russell Lowell.*

MODERN EXAMPLES. "The century just closed has been a century of martyrdoms beyond any since the days of Constantine. Burmah, the South Seas, Madagascar, Bulgaria, Armenia, and now China, have each in turn been the scene of painful, and yet triumphant endings to faithful and fruitful lives. But the century has been, not in spite of this, but because of it, more fruitful in missionary labors than any since the death of the apostles. It has sent out more missionaries and has gathered more converts than any that preceded." — *S. S. Times.* The heroism of the missionaries in Armenia and China, and of the Christian disciples within the last few years, has been as great as in the early Christian days, and has lifted up the missionary cause into public notice and repute more than any event for years. In China the outburst "came with the suddenness of an earthquake and with the destructiveness of a great natural catastrophe. It is known that not less than two hundred missionaries, and it is now believed that not less than forty thousand converts to Christianity in China, perished during the terrible months of August, September, and October, 1900, and this sublime testimonial to the reality of the Christ-faith and the sincerity of the Chinese converts was essentially a voluntary offering. The Chinese Christians died with their faces to the front, as nobly as the early martyrs of the church died in the amphitheater or at the stake. Many of them, undoubtedly, were slain in the mad moments when the mobs were rioting, but the great majority of them could have saved themselves and their homes by recanting their faith. Cases of apostasy have been so few that they are not worth taking into account. Never was there a more magnificent refutation of the slander that the Chinese become Christians for gain; never a more beautiful example of Christian faith and patience on a great scale in the face of the most awful dangers.

"If this terrible massacre had occurred in the days of Diocletian, monuments would have been built and days set apart to commemorate so great a sacrifice, so heroic and convincing a testimony." — *The Outlook, January, 1901.* "The heroism with which not only European and American missionaries faced death in China, but with which their converts died for the name of Christ, has made a marked impression on even indifferent people. It has closed the mouths of those who declared that the Chinaman became a Christian only for a mouthful of rice, and it has called out expressions of respect for the missionary work and its results in the most unexpected quarters." — *S. S. Times.*

NOTE. The two editors agree as to the effect of these heroisms.

"A martyrdom, the like of which has not been seen since the earliest days of Christianity, could not fail to freshen the faith of the whole Christian world." "It has never been through surrounding perils that the church has lost ground, but through ease and prosperity. The sight of brave men and tender women dying for a great cause has always acted as a stimulus to courage in those who beheld the sight." "May not his church take courage in its labors for China, seeing that there is now a grand background of heroic life and death behind her labors among this people? For the God who, as Phillips Brooks says, 'wastes no history' will not allow one drop of blood to be shed for him without making it fruitful of eternal good."

II. **But the Work went on.** — V. 4. Just as we have seen in modern missions, the attempts at opposition but increased the number of the disciples. See "Interpreter's House" in *Pilgrim's Progress.* **Howbeit.** In spite of the opposition and persecution, the deeds and teachings of the apostles had their due effect. **And the number of the men,** ἀνδρῶν, "a word distinctly restricted to *men*," and the word for women "is added to it where it is intended to denote a mixed body of men and women (5: 14)." — *Rendall.* So also *Knowling.* **Was** (came to be) **about five thousand.** Not that *five thousand* were added to those who had believed before, but the total of men converted reached that number. The enumeration of three thousand converts at Pentecost (Acts 2: 41) included both men and women gathered at Jerusalem from all quarters for the feast. This passage

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5. And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Je-ru'sa-lem;

6. And [1] An'nas the high priest was there, and Cā'ia-phăs, and Jŏhn, and Al-ĕx-ăn'der, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest were gathered together at Je-ru'sa-lem.

7. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, inquired, [2] By what power, or by in what name, have ye done this?

[1] Luke 3: 2; John 11: 49. [2] Matt. 21: 23; Acts 7: 27.

speaks of five thousand *men*, many of them heads of families resident in Jerusalem. An enormous expansion of the church had taken place in the interval." — *Rendall.*

NOTE that while these five thousand were all Jews, they were something more, a new stamp was on them (*Stifler*), a new perfume, a new atmosphere was around them, a new light shone in their characters.

QUESTION. "What was the essential difference between the five thousand believers and their fellow-countrymen that enabled them to be identified as Peter's converts?" — *Professor Sanders.*

III. **Opposition aided the Cause by giving the Gospel a Hearing before the Rulers.** — Vs. 5–7. The priests, rulers, and leading men would not join the crowds, nor go to the places where the gospel was being presented. The only way to reach these classes was through a trial before those who were determined to crush the new teaching.



High Priest.
With Miter and Breastplate.

5. Rulers, and elders, and scribes, composed the Sanhedrim, the great Jewish court. The *rulers* were the chief priests, the most prominent representatives of the priesthood, belonging chiefly, if not entirely, to the Sadducean party. — *Knowling.* The *elders* were leading laymen, all members of the Sanhedrim who were neither priests nor scribes. The *scribes* were professional lawyers who adhered to the Pharisees." — *Josephus, Antiquities XVII. 6, 2.* They were interpreters of the law, and writers upon it.

6. And Annas the high priest, though deposed by the Romans, **and Caiaphas,** his son-in-law, made high priest in his stead, yet "like other retired high priests, retained not only the title, but also many of the rights and obligations of the office." — *Knowling.* Annas was a man of great influence, and the Jews refused to recognize the right of the Romans to appoint high priests. Before these same two Jesus was tried. **John, and Alexander.** Nothing is known of them except what is here implied, that they were prominent relatives of the high priest. **The kindred of the high priest.** Probably members of the Sanhedrim. Five of the sons of Annas attained to the office of high priest. **Were gathered together.** In the hall of the Sanhedrim, adjoining the temple court on the west.

7. And when they had set them in the midst. The two apostles and the lame man (v. 14). "The Sanhedrim sat in a semicircle, with the president in the center, while opposite were three benches for the scholars of the Sanhedrists, who thus practically learned law. The Sanhedrim, when complete, consisted of seventy-one members, comprising chief priests, the elders of the people, and the most renowned of the rabbis; but twenty-three formed a quorum competent to transact business." — *Stokes.* **They asked.** The tense implies that this question was put repeatedly. — *Schaff.* **By what power, or by** (Gr. "in," under the influence of) **what name.** *Power* is force, *name* is authority. By what magical power did you do this, and what right had you to use such power? They wanted to convict Peter and John of sorcery, by having worked a miracle not in the name of God, but of a

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8. [1] Then Pē'ter, filled with the Hō'ly Ghōst, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders, [of Is'ra-el,]

9. [If] if we this day [be] are examined [of the] concerning a good deed done to [the] an impotent man, by what means [he] this man is [a] made whole;

10. [Be] be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Is'ra-el, [2] that [by] in the name of Jē'sus Christ of Năz'a-rĕth, whom ye crucified, [3] whom God raised from the dead, *even* [by] in him doth this man stand here before you whole.

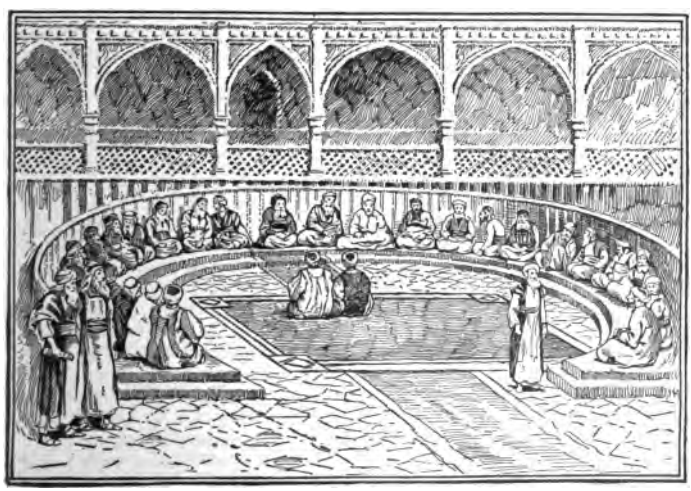
[1] Luke 12: 11.
[2] Acts 3: 6, 16.
[3] Acts 2: 24.
a Or, *saved.*

crucified malefactor. They hoped to bring the apostles under the awful death-sentence pronounced in the law (Deut. 13), which especially provides for the case when the sign or the wonder comes to pass. See also Ex. 22: 18; Lev. 19: 26. It was of the utmost importance to them that Jesus should not be alive again, and all their trouble in putting him to death have been in vain. The fact of the cure they did not attempt to deny.

IV. **Peter preaching the Gospel to the Sanhedrim.** — Vs. 8–12. "Chrysostom comments on the Christian wisdom of St. Peter on this occasion, how full of confidence he is, and yet how he utters not a word of insult, but speaks with all respect." — *Knowling.* Note how Peter lives up to his own precepts in his first Epistle (2: 12–17), to have your behavior beautiful, noble, becoming, among the Gentiles, that wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may, by your good works, which they behold, glorify God; and to honor all men.

8. Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost. In fulfilment of Christ's promise (Matt. 10: 19, 20). Thus Peter was given courage to speak the truth, and guided to the choice of the right things to say, and the best way of saying them. **Ye rulers . . . and elders.** Peter is respectful, but these very titles imply that they should be leaders in every good work, and favor all that would help the people.

9. If (εἰ) "chosen not without oratorical nicety: *if, as is the case.*" — *Knowling.* **We this day be examined of** (concerning) **the good deed.** A strange charge to make against any one! But they hated the good deed because of the necessary inferences and results that grew out of it. The expression itself is an answer to the charge. There is an unconscious irony in it. **By what means,** whereby (ἐν τίνι), or (as Rendall) by what person. It embraces the two questions of v. 7. **He,** now standing before you, **is made whole.** Complete, perfect in body, the normal condition. It includes, according to Knowling, "health for body and soul alike."



Hall of the Sanhedrim.

10. Be it known. Peter speaks the truth squarely without fear or favor. **By** (or in) **the name of Jesus Christ** (the Messiah) **of Nazareth.** Peter boldly speaks the hated word. **Whom ye crucified.** Peter arraigns his accusers. They are now the criminals on trial for

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11. [1] This He is become was made the head of the corner.
12. [2] Neither is there salvation in any other: And in none other is there salvation: for there neither is none there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, whereby wherein we must be saved.

[1] Psa. 118: 22; Matt. 21: 42. [2] Matt. 1: 21; Acts 10: 43.

murdering their Messiah. The day of judgment has come for them. Their prisoner becomes their Elijah, saying, "Thou art he that troubleth Israel"; their Nathan saying, "Thou art the man." **Whom God raised from the dead.** God counteracted their wickedness by doing exactly the opposite of what they had done. This fact convicted them of sin. They were arrayed against God. Moreover, Peter insists on the fact of the resurrection because that was the crowning proof that Jesus was the Messiah, and was then living in heaven. **Doth this man stand here.** This shows that he was with the apostles.

11. **This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders.** The reference is to Psa. 118: 22. It is possible that these words were regarded as Messianic. V. 26 of the same Psalm was used of Jesus during the triumphal entry. "St. Peter does not hesitate to refer his judges to the same passage of Scripture which a few short weeks before Jesus of Nazareth had quoted to a deputation of the Sanhedrim. In that case, too, the question put to Jesus had been as to the authority with which he acted (Matt. 21: 42; Mark 12: 10)." — *Knowling.* You who were set to build up God's spiritual temple, the kingdom of heaven, have rejected and tried to destroy the very foundation stone, without which it could not be builded. But in spite of your efforts, that rejected **stone has become the head of the corner.** Not the copestone, but that which lies at the foundation of the edifice, in the angle where two of the walls come together, and which gives to the edifice its strength and support. — *Hackett.* Jesus is alive, and on him is being built the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 3: 9–15).

ILLUSTRATION. THE REJECTED STONE. The Jewish rabbis have a tradition concerning one of the stones cut in a distant quarry for the temple of Solomon, and brought to Jerusalem to find its place in the building. But it was of a peculiar shape, and though carved with figures of exquisite loveliness and grace, there was found no place for it, and the perplexed workmen thrust it one side. During the years the temple was building, it became covered with moss and rubbish, and was the laughing-stock of the workmen as they passed by. But when the temple, shining in marble and gold, was almost completed, and the multitudes were assembled to witness the dedication, inquiry was made for the top-stone, the crowning beauty of the whole. They found it in this despised and neglected moss-covered stone. They cleansed it of its defilement, brought to light its beauty, lifted it to its place amid shouts of joy, and it became the crown and glory of the temple. So it was with Christ. So it will be with the doctrines and principles of Christ. So it has been with many of his servants; the rejected martyrs and prophets have been crowned at last, and sing God's praises to golden harps.

ILLUSTRATION. BURNING LUTHER'S BOOKS. When Luther's books were publicly burned by order of the Papal Nuncio, the remark made to the Emperor Charles' ministers was, "Do you imagine that Luther's doctrines are found only in those books that you are throwing into the fire? They are written where you cannot reach them, in the hearts of the nation." — *D'Aubigné, bk. 6, chap. 11.*

12. **Neither is there salvation in any other.** Not only from disease and ills of the body, as in the case of this lame man, but from sin, spiritual disease, of which bodily disease was the type. **Salvation.** Greek, *the salvation*, that which the Jewish nation were looking for. They saw only the shadow, the distorted image of the reality which Jesus was to bring. It was the preservation of the nation; but that was but a type of the spiritual salvation which was in Jesus Christ. The last chapters of Revelation give a picture of the national salvation; and this is made up of the salvation of individuals, and is a type of the transformation Jesus will work in every believer. **There is none other name.** *Name* here stands for Jesus Christ himself, and all there is in him of wisdom, power, love, divineness; just as a man's name to a note stands for all a man is and has, — his property, his character, his ability, his integrity. **Under heaven.** Equivalent to, In all the earth. **Given among men.** Made known among them. **Whereby** (in which) **we** (all members of the human race) **must be saved.** In this clause *must be saved*, the Greek word δεῖ implies an absolute necessity. — *Cowles.* It means not *may*, but *must*, as the only alternative, since God has appointed no other way of salvation. — *Abbott.* There was no

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other power under heaven that could have saved the Jewish nation from the destruction that came upon them thirty-five or forty years later, as there is no other power that can save each soul from sin and death.

WHY IS JESUS THE ONLY NAME? 1. Because he has brought the good news from God of his fatherhood and tender love and forgiveness.

2. Because he lived the heavenly life on earth, and only so far as we consciously or unconsciously have the same life principle, and seek to live according to his example, can we be fitted for heaven.

3. All the elements of power that can save men from sin are found in Jesus Christ and him crucified, — the atonement for sin, the need of forgiveness, the way of forgiveness, every motive of love and fear and duty and hope that can move the soul to a better life.

4. The *essential peculiarity of Christ's religion* is *that it is a system of redemption.* Other religious try to tell us what we ought to be; this makes us what we ought to be. Others express our needs; Christ satisfies them. Others show us heaven; Christ fits us for heaven and takes us there.

NOTE ON WHEREBY AND WHEREIN. We are saved *through* Jesus, as in Rom. 6: 23, but in this verse the true reading is *in* him. We live and move as Christians *in* Christ. "Eternal life is not anything apart from himself." Bishop Westcott says, "Am I wrong in saying that he who has mastered the meaning of the two prepositions *into* the name (for *in the name* in the baptismal formula, Matt. 28: 19) and *in* Christ has found the central truth of Christianity. Certainly I would have gladly given the ten years of my life spent in the Revision to bring only these two phrases of the New Testament to the heart of Englishmen."

V. **The Outcome.** — Vs. 13–31. FIRST. The position of the disciples was unanswerable. Two facts silenced their opponents. 1. The effect of Jesus himself on the character of the disciples. These men were **unlearned and ignorant** (v. 13), *i. e.*, without school training, and ungifted, "mere nobodies," belonging to "this multitude which knoweth not the law" (John 7: 49). And yet they had this marvelous power of logic, of eloquence, of healing. The Sanhedrists looked down upon their betters "from the whole altitude of their inferiority" as had often been done before. — *From Farrar.* They recognized that this power came from their association with Jesus. Their bearing, their boldness, their spirit, their works, were like his. Jesus must have been a power, must still be, in order to produce such effects.

TOOK KNOWLEDGE OF THEM. The clay that has been with the roses, the clothes from the scented chest, tell us where they have been. The taint of bad company clings to us in spite of all we can do. Moses' face shone when he came from the mountain after forty days with God.

> You may break, you may shatter the vase, if you will,
> But the scent of the roses will hang round it still.

See the poem, "A Persian fable says: One day." *Suggestive Illustrations* on Acts, p. 104.

TO BE WITH JESUS is to live in communion with him, to have him in our thoughts, to love him with all our hearts, to go to him for guidance, to make him our daily companion, to be in sympathy with his plans and purposes, to feel his presence and his approval, to do all things for his glory, to dwell much on his words and his example, seeing his face in the mirror of the Scriptures. This daily companionship, this shining of his life upon ours, will change us into the same image from glory to glory as by the spirit of the Lord. *The results:* this likeness will show in our daily life and character; men will thus see it as the effect of our union with Christ; this will point them to the Saviour.

LIBRARY. See the story of Rappacini's Daughter in Hawthorne's *Mosses from an old Manse.*

2. The other fact was the presence of the healed man himself (v. 14). This was an unanswerable fact. Facts are the most convincing arguments. Joseph's wagons convinced Jacob that Joseph was alive, when words had failed. What Christianity has done is the unanswerable argument in its favor. It can save because it has saved others. It can redeem other nations because it has redeemed so many nations.

SECOND. THE ACQUITTAL. — Vs. 15–22. In view of these facts, and the other fact (v. 21) that all the people glorified God for that which was done, the Sanhedrim dismissed the prisoners with a command to cease preaching Jesus. This the two apostles stoutly refused to do, and thus the trial ended in a vain threat.

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ILLUSTRATION. Arnot compares the conduct of the rulers in trying to stop the apostles from preaching Christ, to some ignorant savages who thought to stop the ball from a cannon by ramming the mouth of the cannon full of stones and clay, which only increased its terrible power.

ILLUSTRATION. So Luther, when pressed to stay away from the Diet at Worms, where he was to be tried for heresy, said to the messenger, "Go tell your master that though there should be as many devils as there are tiles on its roofs, I would enter it." And again of his mortal enemy, Duke George, "If I had business at Leipzig, I would ride into Leipzig, though it rained Duke Georges for nine days running." See Plato's *Apology*, p. 23.

THIRD. THE EFFECT ON THE APOSTLES. — Vs. 23–31. One of the most beautiful and noble and manly things in the whole history of the apostles is the spirit shown in the prayer offered by the disciples when the result of the trial was reported to them. It was a prayer of faith, of triumph. They did not ask to be sheltered from persecution, but for boldness, for power to do good in the name of Jesus, for wonders of salvation, nothing for self, everything for the cause. And the answer came in a fresh gift of the Holy Spirit, filling their hearts, and great additions to the church.

ILLUSTRATIONS. 1. Dr. John Hall, in one of his sermons, compared the attacks of infidelity upon Christianity to a serpent gnawing at a file. As he kept on gnawing, he was greatly encouraged by the sight of the growing pile of chips, till, feeling pain and seeing blood, he found that he had been wearing his own teeth away against the file, but the file was unharmed.

2. "The church is an anvil which has worn out many hammers."

LESSON VI. — February 9.

THE SIN OF LYING. — Acts 5: 1–11.

Study Acts 4: 32–5: 11. Read James 3.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor.*** — EPH. 4: 25.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Place in the History. — Keep in mind the steps noted in the Acts, through which the church grew up into a strong, holy, useful community prepared to do God's work.

Compare it to the growth of a child, in which one marks the time when he begins to walk, to talk, to go to school, to enter a higher grade, to show some marked characteristics.

The New Crisis. — There are two sources of danger to any church: one from without, and the other from within. In our last lesson we studied the first attempt from without to destroy the church. The fires of persecution were kindled to consume it. But the kingdom was like the three heroes in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace; the flames did not harm them, and one like the Son of God was with them in the flames. And the light from them caused men to see in clearer light the true God and the gospel.

Now comes a more dangerous attack from within. Satan entered the Eden in disguise. Fire cannot burn the church, but a

THE SECTION

includes Acts 4: 32–5: 16.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. A. D. 30–33. It is impossible to tell exactly when this event occurred, but probably within two or three years after the founding of the church at Pentecost.

Place. Jerusalem.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

These can be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

The character of the church.
Barnabas.
Ananias and his motives.
What was his sin?
The cause of his death.
The effect of this incident.
Fear.
Lying.

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church can commit suicide. The real danger to a church is from within. The engine is powerless if the fires go out. The light goes out when the electric current ceases to flow. We are to study this attack, learn its lessons for to-day, and see how God overruled even this, by victory over the evil, for the advancement of the gospel.

LESSON OUTLINE.

The general introduction as given above.

SUBJECT: Danger from a Bad Church Member. — Lying.

I. THE CHURCH BOUNTIFUL AND BEAUTIFUL (Acts 4: 32–37).
Its several characteristics.
Barnabas.

II. SATAN ENTERS THE NEW PARADISE (vs. 1–4).
This second method of injuring the church, compared with that in our last lesson.
Hypocrites, keeping back part of the price.
The complex sin of Ananias.

III. THE DANGER AVERTED (vs. 5–10).
By the signal punishment of the offenders by the divine hand.
Severity and goodness in the punishment.
Lying, — three forms.

IV. THE OUTCOME (vs. 11–16).
The evil was compelled to aid the good in various ways.

LEARN BY HEART.

Eph. 4: 25; Ex. 20: 16; Rev. 21: 8, 27.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

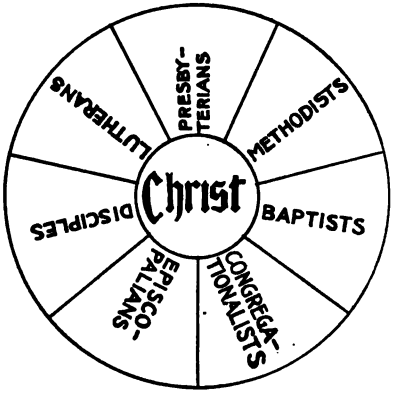
Dr. Lyman Abbott's *Christ and the Social Order*, and Professor Ely's *Social Law of Service*, on the relation of Christianity to the poor. Pierson's *Acts of the Holy Spirit* contains some remarkable facts, like this judgment on Ananias. On hypocrisy, see William Secker's *Nonesuch Professor*, pp. 109–114. Rogers' *Greyson Letters*, letters on "What are the Best Punishments of Hypocrisy?" and "Compulsory Virtue." Dante in the *Inferno* describes hypocrites in the eighth circle and fifth pit. For an illustration see "The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan" in *Lalla Rookh;* Mrs. Opie on "Lying." Bacon's *Essay* on "Dissimulation," with Whately's *Annotations. Sermons* by Sidney Smith on "Ananias;" Arnot's *Church in the House*, chaps. 22, 23.

PICTURES.

St. Peter distributing Alms, Masaccio (Florence); *Death of Ananias*, Raphael (cartoons at South Kensington); *St. Philip giving Clothes to a Leper*, Andrea del Sarto.

I. **The Church Bountiful and Beautiful.** — Vs. 32–37. The church continued to have the characteristics which belonged to it at the beginning, when it was small. Persecution did not destroy, but purified and brightened the church. Their goodness was not a mere flash of excitement, but a steady burning and shining light. "Putting together the passages in Acts 1–4 relating to the church, such as Acts 1: 12–14, 15, 26; 2: 1–4, 41–47; 4: 4, 17–20, 23–31, 32–35, show how it grew in numbers, unity, and influence." — *Professor Sanders.*

Charles Reade, a member of the English Parliament, said that he had in his library an old book describing the various sects of religion, a book which belonged to his grandmother. On the fly leaf she had made a rude diagram like this, and underneath had written, "The nearer to Christ the center, the nearer to one another."



FIRST. It was filled with the Holy Spirit, the source of all goodness and power.

SECOND. It was a united church. It possessed the true unity, that of heart and soul; the unity of the same spiritual life in all; the unity of one great master and head for all; the unity of love and sympathy; the unity of aim and purpose; the unity of one kingdom, with one law and gospel; one government under one Invisible King. It is the unity of an army, with one leader, loyal to one cause, but with many departments and companies and organizations. It is the unity of nature, with one law and principle, but with an infinite variety of forms. It is the

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unity of an anthem — several parts, many notes, many voices, an infinite variety of sound-waves, but in perfect harmony, under one leader, with one purpose.

THIRD. Mutual helpfulness, generosity, fellowship, rose to a high degree, and has been an example to the church through all the ages. It is this kind of church which the Lord wishes to grow. And this manifestation of the Spirit of Christ greatly aided the growth and influence of the church.

FOURTH. They were a witnessing church, by word, by teaching, by character, by deeds.

FIFTH. They had power. They were so completely filled with the Holy Spirit, they gave the Lord Jesus such full control over their spirits and lives, that the power from heaven could work freely through them.

ILLUSTRATE by the copper wire through which electricity flows. The great difficulty has been to make it so pure as not to obstruct the current. So obstructions in water-pipes.

SIXTH. "Great grace was upon them all." This description of the early church reminds us of the description of the youthful Jesus. "The child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him." "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2: 40, 52). Grace, χάρις, from the same root as χαίρω, *to rejoice*. "Primarily, *that which gives joy or pleasure;* and hence *outward beauty, loveliness*, something which *delights* the beholder" — a loveliness of form in the Greek graces and loveliness of character in the Christian graces. Thence grace means *the expression of this to others, kindness, favor, good will.* They had the favor of the people, as in Acts 2: 47, which brings expressions of good will; but above all the favor, the loving-kindness of God, which is the most perfect delight in the universe, bringing the favor of man and the graces of character and life, virtues in their lovely aspect.

Luke seems to love to dwell on the charming picture, a garden of Eden in a wilderness world; an oasis in the desert; an Elim with its palm trees and wells of water on the rough and arid way from Egypt to the Promised Land. We can easily see that a church of such a character would make rapid advances, and hasten on the day of the Lord's victory over the world.

SEVENTH. *One Notable Example.* In contrast with Ananias, whose story is told in the next chapter, we have presented to us one man, who was the embodiment of the noble characteristics of the church.

JOSEPH BARNABAS. Joses is one form of the name "Joseph" (*Thayer*). Barnabas is commonly derived from *Bar*, "son," and *Nebuah*, "prophecy," derived from a word meaning *to boil forth as from a spring, to pour out words as from a fountain;* the impelling force being the inspiration of God. He received after his conversion the name of "Son of Consolation." It is the same word used by John in describing the Holy Spirit, *the Comforter*, παράκλητον, from παρά, *to the side of*, and καλέω, *to call or summon* for comfort or help, *as an advocate, counselor, comforter*. See *Suggestive Illustrations* on John, pp. 395–398. Barnabas probably had a great gift at helpful, consoling, strengthening exhortation, as a fountain of the water of life, inspired by God. His power was less in doctrine and teaching, but more in spiritual uplift and inspiration. He was a comforter by his character, by his lovely and sympathetic spirit, by his personal ministrations, by his large gifts, as well as by his words of faith and courage and hope.

It is well to notice here what "comforting" really is. The word means *making strong together* (from *con*, "together," and *fortis*, "strong"), *giving*, or *inspiring strength, vigor, fresh life, courage;* not merely aiding to a state of tranquil enjoyment.

Barnabas was a native of Cyprus, where were the imperial copper mines; a Levite (not a priest, the descendant of Aaron), who had inherited property. He probably became acquainted with Paul at Jerusalem and at the University of Tarsus. He became a member of the church at Antioch and was joined with Paul in the first foreign mission, as we shall see in a later lesson.

NOTE how the history gives us the good as well as the bad. It tells the whole truth, and this is what we need to know. It is never wise to measure the good of any cause by the weeds. To do so is to make Sahara better than the finest garden in the world, nor is it well to picture the past as a garden of Eden without any struggle with weeds. That would destroy hope and courage. "Barnabas is a light at the pier-head, streaming outward through the night, marking for the mariner the way of life; Ananias, dying with a lie on his lips, buoys a rock where many have perished and warns the wayfarer from the place of doom. Though the two men are not alike good, both examples are for us alike useful."— *Arnot.* One as an example, the other as a warning.

In judging of human nature, we must put this story of the early church into the picture,

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1. But a certain man named An-a-nī'as, with Săp-phī'ra his wife, sold a possession,

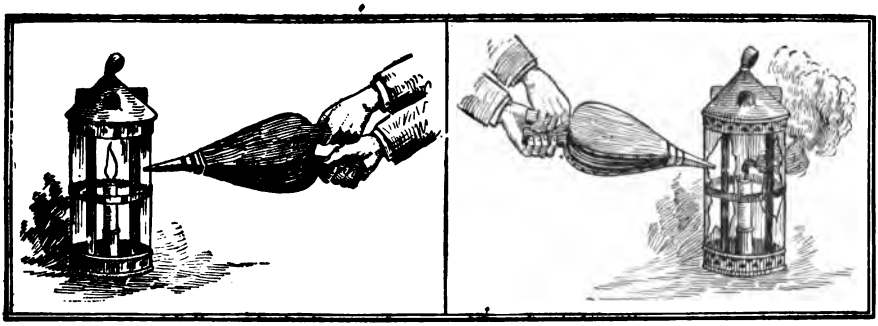
2. And kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy to it, [1] and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

[1] Acts 4: 37.

if we would see it as it is. We should always write up the credit page as well as the debit. The world has periods of darkness, but he that leaves out the sunshine does not tell us the truth about the world.

II. **Satan enters the New Paradise.** — Vs. 1–4. Satan's kingdom was in danger, and something must be done to put an end to the progress of Christ's kingdom. His first plan was by persecution, as we learned in our last lesson. But this was a signal failure. It led to more prayer, more faith, more courage, more devotion. It advertised the gospel. It scattered the seeds of truth broadcast. It led to greater miracles, to more fervent preaching, to more active generosity, to fuller grace. The attack from without being a failure, the next plan of Satan was to destroy the church from within, casting a shadow over its light, raising up false disciples, introducing evil motives, pride, ambition, and hypocrisy into the very church itself. The enemy planted tares among the wheat. So he had driven man from paradise ages before. Why may not the same plan succeed again?

ILLUSTRATION from Spurgeon's *Sermons in Candles* (Am. Tract Soc.), pp. 121, 122. A man tries in vain with his bellows to blow out a candle in a lantern by blowing



against the glass. But break the glass and let the blast get within, and the candle is in danger.

ILLUSTRATION. A ship is safe on the ocean so long as the ocean is not in the ship. The Christian is safe in the world, with all its waves of persecution, so long as the world is not in the Christian.

1. **But.** In contrast with Barnabas. "The little word "but" is the hinge on which great issues turn." — *Arnot.* **Ananias.** *Favored of the Lord*, or *the Lord is gracious.* His character was in intense contrast with not only his name, but his namesake, "Hananiah" (the Hebrew form, as Ananias is the Greek), one of the three men who in Daniel's time were cast into the fiery furnace rather than deny their God (Dan. 3). **Sapphira.** If a Syriac name, "Beautiful" (*Blass*); if Greek, the gem "Sapphire." **Sold a possession.** Any possession, but here landed property (v. 3).

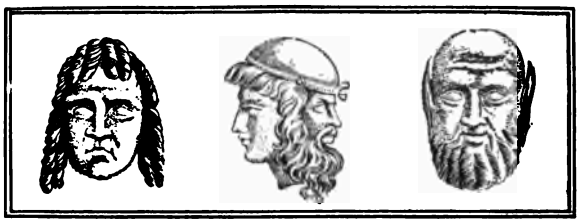
2. **Kept back part of the price.** The Greek means *to set apart for one's self wrongfully.* **And brought a certain part,** representing it as the whole. **His wife also being privy to it.** This shows that this was not a sudden overwhelming temptation attacking them unawares, but a deliberate plan. **Laid it at the apostles' feet.** Apparently at some public religious service, where they could be seen of men. Hypocrites blow the trumpet, or how could people know their virtues (Matt. 6: 2)? Calvin says, "So it came to pass that he honored the feet of the apostles more than the eyes of God."

THE CRIME was a complex one, woven of many strands. (1) There was a selfish, ambitious desire to be highly regarded by their fellow-disciples, to be popular beyond their deserts. They saw how the generous Barnabas was loved and esteemed, and they envied him and coveted the same honor. On the other hand, it was a discredit to their piety, and

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3. [1] But Pē'ter said, An-a-nī'as, why hath [2] Sā'tan filled thine heart [a] to lie to the Hō'ly Ghōst, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land?

[1] Num. 30: 2. [2] Luke 22: 3. [a] Or, *to deceive*, v. 9.



Masks. *From Calmet.*

a disgrace for a rich family to keep all their property for themselves, while every one else was giving largely. (2) At the same time they were covetous and avaricious. They were unwilling to pay the price. They were too stingy to do that which they wanted the credit of doing. Hence (3) they were hypocrites, covering their self-seeking vanity and covetousness under a mask of generosity. This led (4) to *lying*, deliberate falsehood of the most unprincipled kind; (5) *Sacrilege*, an open treason to the Spirit of God, since they sinned in the brightest light that ever shone upon the earth, under the strongest possible influences for good, and where the sin was an insult to God, and might be an unspeakable injury to his cause. (6) At the same time there were probably mingled with these motives some desire to help the poor and some admiration of the devotion and generosity of the others. They may have feared lest if they gave all they would have to live in poverty. There was probably at least enough of these to salve their consciences and to veil themselves in a measure from themselves. Only devils have no mixture of higher motives. It is a dangerous hypocrisy that deceives ourselves.

HYPOCRITES, ὑποκριταὶ, *actors, those who play a part upon a stage*, usually, in ancient times, in a mask. The player appears in one character, while he is really another; the beggar may be dressed like a king, and a fool act the part of a wise man. Hence, the word came to mean *the assuming of a false appearance of virtue and religion.* "Some hypocrites were like the little images that they place in the very *bowing* of the vaults of churches, that look as if they held up the church, but are only puppets." — *Lord Bacon.*



Hypocrites. *From Calmet.*

He was a man
Who stole the livery of the court of heaven
To serve the devil in. — *Pollok.*

Oh, what may man within him hide,
Though angel on the outward side.
— *Measure for Measure.*

NOTE. People may be bad, and grow worse under the best of influences, as Judas under the example and tuition of Christ.

ILLUSTRATION. In Retsch's illustrations of Goethe's *Faust*, there is one plate where angels are dropping roses upon the demons who are contending for Faust's soul, and every rose is like molten metal, burning and blistering wherever it touches.

3. But Peter said. How did Peter know the truth? How could he see into their hearts? (1) The Spirit must have revealed it to him. (2) This was more natural from the heart of Peter being clarified and quickened by the indwelling Spirit. Compare the X-rays. **Why hath Satan filled thine heart?** This is the exact opposite of the case of the apostles. They were filled with the Holy Ghost, so that there was no room for Satan. Ananias was

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4. While it remained, was (did) it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine (thy) own power? why how is it that thou hast thou conceived this thing in thine (thy) heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

5. And An-a-nī'as hearing these words [1] fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on (upon) all them that heard these things (it).

[1] Vs. 10, 11.

filled with Satan, so that there was no room for the Holy Spirit.

THE TEMPTER. The same who tempted Christ took hold of the evil in Ananias' heart and kindled it to a blaze with the fires of hell, picturing the honor and happiness he would gain from his sin, having the pleasures of goodness and sin at the same time. The flames of the pit were made to seem the radiance of heaven. But the fact of temptation is no excuse for the sin. The sin was their own. It was their business to resist temptation and overcome it, and grow strong thereby. It was the battle that made victory possible. It was the Hill Difficulty, by which alone they could climb to wider and more glorious vision. They stumbled over the very stairway to glory. The fact that temptation is often suggested from without gives hope in the struggle against sin, for it would prove us much more deadened to good, and pervaded with evil, if all the sin grew out of our own natures.

COMPARE Plato's illustration of "Gyges' Ring," *Republic*, book II., chap. 3, and Rogers' *Greyson Letters*, "The Madman and the Devil."



From Calmet.

Hypocrites.

To lie to the Holy Ghost. The lie was both an acted and a spoken one (v. 8). "They lied to the Holy Ghost, because the offering was made, not to the apostles, nor to the church, but to God, and the act was thus a direct falsehood addressed to him."—*Abbott.* And was in direct contravention of the presence, the works, and the power of the Holy Spirit. **And to keep back part of the price,** while representing it to be the whole.

KEEPING BACK PART OF THE PRICE. There still exists those who keep back part of the price. Like Festus they are almost persuaded, but something holds them back. They will give up all to Christ except some one thing. They will do every duty but one. Even as to things of this life, many fail because they are willing to pay only part of the price of success.

4. While it remained, was it not thine own? No one compelled you to sell the property and give it away. But it was necessary that he should act and speak the truth about it. **Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart?** What caused you to form such a plan? **Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.** That is, the real force of the lie was against God more than man. So David said to God, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned." The sin against man was nothing in comparison to the sin against God. It was unknown to man. It did not harm any man, except indirectly, because it was a sin against God. The injury was to his kingdom. It misrepresented God and his church. It tended to make others think that there was no real piety. The sin was against the teaching and influence of God. There was no sin that Jesus condemned so severely, with so many "woes," as hypocrisy.

ILLUSTRATIONS. A few dead trees in the forest, or dried stalks in the fields, do not prove that spring is a failure, or that the sun does not impart real life. The debris at the edge of the Nile floods, left high and dry and useless, does not prove that those floods do not fertilize Egypt and make it a garden of fertility. Rotten apples on the ground do not prove that the tree is not good and does not bear good fruit. Men counterfeit bank-notes because there are good ones and the bank is sound.

III. The Danger averted by the Signal Punishment of the Offender.—Vs. 5–10. **5. Ananias . . . fell down, and gave up the ghost.** His death was the

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6. And the young men arose, [1] wound and wrapped him up, round, and they carried him out, and buried him.

7. And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

8. And Pē'ter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.

9. Then But Pē'ter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together [2] to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and they shall carry thee out.

10. [3] Then fell she And she fell down straightway immediately at his feet, and yielded gave up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and carrying her forth, they carried her out and buried her by her husband.

[1] John 10: 40. [2] V. 3; Matt. 4: 7. [3] V. 5.

direct act of God, and in no sense the act of Peter and the apostles. Very probably they were as much astonished as any one. Had Peter done this act, he would have been a murderer, subject to the law of the land. But he had no hand in it whatever. **Great fear came on all.** Fear of God, an intelligent fear of his searching vision and unerring judgment, and a dread conviction of the deadliness of sin "came on all them that heard these things." — *Butler.*

6. And the young men. "A society of young and able men was attached to each synagogue, who were called the servants of the synagogue, and were held in readiness to perform any menial duties about the place." — *Canon Tristram.* **Wound him up.** Wrapped around him his own mantle (*Tristram*) or their own (*Knowling*). Meyer regards the words as meaning that they drew his limbs together. **And buried him.** "Partly for sanitary reasons, and partly to avoid defilement, the interval between death and burial was very brief."—*Knowling.* "Generally within three or four hours."—*Tristram.*

7. About the space of three hours. She waited thus long anxiously for her husband's return with the news of the praise and honor received for their large gift. Then, weary and puzzled at his absence, **his wife . . . came in** to learn the reason. **Not knowing what was done.** No one, it has been suggested, who had seen her, as yet had had courage to tell her of her husband's doom. — *Schaff.*

8. Peter answered unto her. Answered her inquiry, shown by her looks or the fact of her coming. **Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much?** Implying "and no more," pointing at the same time to the pile of gold Ananias had presented, or naming the sum. The question gave her the opportunity to retract and to state the truth. She could have saved her husband by refusing to join in his plan. She could now clear her own conscience by confession. But she shut the door of repentance by telling a lie. "A wilful falsehood is a cripple and cannot stand alone. It is easy to tell one lie, hard to tell but one lie." — *Fuller.*

9. Agreed together. Showing that the sin was deliberate, and therefore without palliation or excuse. They were not overtaken by a sudden tornado, but plotted in calm sunshine. **To tempt the Spirit of the Lord.** To tempt God is to dare him, to put him to the test whether he will see the sin and punish it or not, so that God and his government must be put into a false light before the world, or he must take notice of the offense. **Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door.** "As the cemeteries are always at some little distance outside the cities, the space of three hours would not be at all a long time for those engaged in the burial to be absent."—*Canon Tristram.* It is probable that, being a man of property, he had a tomb of his own, perhaps an ancestral one.

10. Then fell she down straightway at his feet. The death was not inflicted by Peter, but by God.

THE SEVERITY OF THE PUNISHMENT. (1) It was deserved. (2) It was necessary in order to save the church from destruction from within. "It is remarkable, as a historic fact, that just so soon as any movement, though *beginning* with a spiritual impulse and even in a spirit of protest and reform, gets to be popular and numerically strong, its point of peril is reached." — *Pierson.* (3) It was thus an act of mercy. God has terrible judg-

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11. [1] And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

[1] V. 5; Acts 2: 43.

ments upon men, but they are always for the good of the world. Thus, the first Sabbath-breaker was stoned (Num. 15: 36) for the same reasons. To allow such a defiant breaking of the law to go unpunished would be to give the reins to lawlessness. The first defiant criminal when the people entered upon the possession of the Holy Land — Achan — was summarily punished (Josh. 7). The same reasons led to the sudden death of Uzzah, when he broke the law concerning the ark of the covenant (2 Sam. 6).

LIBRARY. Lowell's *Essays*, vol. IV., on Dante, p. 251. "Exact justice is commonly more merciful in the long run than pity," etc.

LYING. 1. It is of the utmost importance that we should not lie to ourselves, trying to deceive ourselves as to our motives, offering excuses to ourselves in order to hide from ourselves the real reasons for our conduct; as when we make the faults of Christians the excuse for not becoming Christians, or when we say to ourselves that we are wild, and do not go to church because our parents were too strict.

"To thine own self be true;
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."
— *Hamlet* 1: 3.

"Friends, if we be honest with ourselves,
We shall be honest with each other."
— *George Macdonald* in *Marquis of Lossie, chap.* 71.

2. We should avoid the deadly sin of lying about others, or to others. Never tell a lie. Truthfulness is the only condition on which human intercourse is possible, and it lies at the foundation of all personal character. No matter how bad a man is, there is room for hope with respect to him if he is essentially truthful and honest; but if he is a liar, if truth and error are confounded in his own mind and character, there is nothing to build upon. Hence the terrible denunciations against liars and hypocrites in the Bible. The hypocrite is one who lies by his actions, and for a selfish purpose. Lying takes on as many forms as the old man of the sea in the hands of Hercules. (See Hawthorne's *Wonder Book*, "The Three Golden Apples.") "Liars" include gossips who retail scandal, who report only the bad, and not the good. It has been said that if every person had a trumpet like the one in Hood's "Tale of a Trumpet," by which people heard not the words, but the thoughts of others, there would be few friends left in the world. Those who misrepresent other people, churches, sects, or parties, whether intentionally or carelessly, not having taken all the pains possible to learn the truth. Those who impute false and unworthy motives to others. Those who put false names to things, bad names on good things, or good names on bad things: as calling strict Christians, puritanical; uprightness, stiffness; virtue, prudishness; or, calling dishonesties, business transactions; slanders, the blunt telling the truth.

"Who dares think one thing and another tell
My soul detests him as the gates of hell."
— *Pope's Iliad* 9: 412.

So in Eden, Ithuriel with his spear touched lightly the disguised tempter.

"For no falsehood can endure
Touch of celestial temper, but returns
Of force to his own likeness."
— *Paradise Lost, book IV., lines 810–812.* (*See the following lines.*)

3. It is death to the soul to lie to God; to profess to worship, without the spirit of worship; to go through religious forms without the heart; to try to deceive God as to one's character and motives.

"And when I pray my heart is in the prayer.
I cannot say one thing and mean another."
— *Longfellow* in *Christus, part* 3.

IV. **The Outcome.** — Acts 5: 11–16. The result was not the ruin of the church, but a firmer piety and progress in every direction. 11. **Great fear came upon all the church.** Not fear of man, but great awe in the presence of God; great reverence for the Holy Spirit, great fear of sinning, great fear lest they might themselves be deceived. This led to careful living, to heart searchings, to watching and prayer. Their eyes were opened to

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see the realities around them, as Elisha's servant, when his eyes were opened, saw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about the prophet (2 Kings 6: 17). **Upon as many as heard.** They realized the terrible nature of sin, the power and nearness of God's judgments against it. They lived in the presence of God's all-searching eye that penetrated into the recesses of the heart. They were conscious of sin.

LIBRARY. Compare Lord Marmion's fear in the presence of the stranger, in Scott's poem.

Those who were not really Christians were afraid to join a community where hypocrisy could be so severely punished, and where there were eyes that could see the secret motives of the heart. This sifting process was necessary, since there was great danger that many might profess to be Christians in order to obtain a support from the fund without working. It would have been easy to gather into the fold many hypocrites who cared only for the loaves and fishes, and thus to bring disaster upon the good name of the disciples.

Great numbers were added to the church. Many miracles and works of grace were wrought. There was special need now of such miracles as are here described, in order to show the real nature of the mysterious power in the church, lest they think of God as a God of terror and not of love. Even the lightning's stroke is a stroke of love. By manifold beneficent uses of the same power we see its beneficent nature. The power was sent to bless, not to harm, and these miracles were object-lessons of the gospel's mission.

LESSON VII. — February 16.

THE SECOND PERSECUTION. — Acts 5 : 33–42.

Study Verses 25–42. Read Acts 5 : 12–42.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake : for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*** — MATT. 5: 10.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The Approach. — Bunyan's double picture shown to Christian in the interpreter's house, where the Evil One is trying to put out a fire by pouring water on the flames, may be effectively used to introduce this lesson. When Christian wondered why the flames burned brighter instead of being put out, the interpreter took him to the other side of the wall, and showed him that another was pouring oil on the fire.

PLACE IN THE HISTORY.

The prosperity and growth of the church, as described in the last lesson, are followed closely by a more violent attack than the one in Lesson V.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

These can be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

What is persecution.
Why men persecute.
Different kinds of persecution.
What to do when persecuted.
The effects of persecution.
God's ways of deliverance from persecution.

LEARN BY HEART.

Heb. 1: 14; Acts 5: 41, 42; Matt. 5: 44, 45.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: Persecution, its Evil, its Failure, and how to deal with it.

I. THE OCCASION OF PERSECUTION (vs. 12–16).

II. THE PERSECUTORS (v. 17).

III. THE FORM THE PERSECUTION TOOK (v. 18).

IV. DELIVERANCE FROM PERSECUTION (vs. 19, 20).

The ministry of angels.

V. THE APOSTLES' ACTION IN PERSECUTION (vs. 21–32).

VI. THE PERSECUTORS FIGHTING AGAINST GOD (vs. 33–40).

VII. REJOICING IN PERSECUTION (vs. 41, 42).

VIII. LESSONS CONCERNING PERSECUTION.

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THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

The Early Church, by the Burrell Brothers (Am. Tract Soc.); Professor Stifler's *Introduction to the Acts*, Section VI., "The Divine Indorsement of the Apostles"; Pierson's *Acts of the Holy Spirit*, chap. 4; *Expositor's Bible*, chap. 12, "Gamaliel and his Prudent Advice." Pliny's letter to Trojan (A. D. 112) on the persecutions, in Ramsay's *Church in the Roman Empire*, chap. 10, and in *Suggestive Illustrations* on Acts. Tacitus on the persecutions under Nero. *Quo Vadis* gives a vivid picture of the persecutions of the early church. See also the story of Wickliffe's ashes in Fox's *Book of Martyrs*. On angels, see Whately's *Good and Evil Angels*; and *Angels and their Ministrations*, by Dr. Patterson (75 cts., Westminster Press).

PICTURES.

Deliverance of St. Peter, Raphael (Vatican); *Peter delivered from Prison* (miniature), Hans Memling (Venice); *St. Peter delivered from Prison*, Lippi (Florence); *Liberation of Peter*, Murillo.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. Immediately after the last lesson. The exact date unknown, but between A. D. 30 and 33.

Place. Jerusalem; the preaching was in one of the porticoes of the outer Court of the Temple. The trial was in the hall of the Sanhedrim, in the city adjoining the temple.

I. **The Occasion of the Persecution.**—Vs. 12–16. Distinguish between the Cause and the Occasion of the persecution. The Cause lay in the hearts of the persecutors, whose rank, power, authority, honor, and income might be affected by the success of the gospel; and whose conscience would accuse them of the murder of the Messiah, and the ruin of their nation.

The Occasion was the success of the gospel: the great numbers of converts, the transformation of their character, their noble and joyous life, their pure teachings, their generosity, and the many things done by them to relieve disease, sorrow, and poverty. The leaders had their choice of two ways: they could try to do better things than the Christians, or they could try to stop the progress of those who were doing these things. They chose the latter way.

II. **The Persecutors.**—V. 17. These were the same we met in Lesson V.,—the high priest, the Sadducees, the priests and rulers, the members of the Sanhedrim, the highest and most respectable and learned body among the Jews.

III. **The Form the Persecution took.**—V. 18. Compare vs. 26, 33, 40. The apostles were so popular with the people, and rightly so, that the rulers did not dare to kill them; but they arrested them, and put them in prison, thus putting, at least, a stop to their teaching and their work. They regarded the four walls of the prison as next best to the silence of a tomb.

IV. **The Deliverance from Persecution.**—Vs. 19, 20. God confounded all the persecutors' plans by sending his angel to liberate the apostles, thus showing that the leaders were fighting against God (v. 39), and were defeated. It was not only deliverance for the apostles, but a warning and a lesson to the rulers which should have brought them to investigate the claims of the Messiah. With the deliverance was the command to go right on preaching the gospel in the most public place.

LIBRARY. In Whittier's *Poems*, "The Angel of St. Mark" gives a beautiful story of angelic deliverance.

> "Oh, weary ones; ye may not see
> Your helpers in their downward flight;
> Nor hear the sound of silver wings
> Slow beating through the hush of night!
>
> "There are who, like the seer of old,
> Can see the helpers God has sent,
> And how life's rugged mountain side
> Is white with many an angel tent."

COMPARE Elisha and his servant, with opened eyes, seeing the mountain round about filled with unseen horses and chariots of fire (2 Kings 6: 17); and Christ's declaration that twelve legions of angels were at hand to help him when needed (Matt. 26: 53).

May not Milton's conjecture have some truth in it—

> "Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
> Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep"?

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33. [1] When / But they, when they heard that, they / this, were cut to the heart, / to the heart, and took counsel / were minded to slay them.

[1] Acts 2: 37.

V. **The Apostles' Action in Persecution.** — Vs. 21-32. FIRST. They went on fearlessly preaching the gospel, just as if there had been no threats. They did not hide their "light under a bushel," but placed it on a candlestick. They were a city set on a hill. The temple where they preached was the most public place possible. Here they went early in the morning, about daybreak. "The temple had already opened its gates to the worshipers and traffickers accustomed to resort thither. The people of the East commence the day much earlier than is customary with us. During a great part of the year in Palestine, the heat becomes oppressive soon after sunrise, and the inhabitants therefore assign their most important duties and labors to the early hours of the day. Worship is often performed in the synagogue at Jerusalem before the sun appears above Olivet." — — *Hackett.*

SECOND. They were again arrested. 21. **The senate,** "γερουσίων, from γέρων, *an old man*, as the Latin *senatus*, **from** *senex*, 'old.' Compare the Latin *patres*, 'fathers,' for the Roman Senate. The notion of *age* was soon merged in that of *dignity*." — *Vincent.* The Sanhedrim is also called (Acts 22: 5) πρεσβυτέριον, of which our word "presbytery" is a transliteration, the assembly of the elders, or older people. **Council . . . and . . . senate.** The Sanhedrim, even all the senate, the two words referring to the same body, the expression "and (*better* even) all the senate" implying that it was a full meeting. — *Knowling.* The interest was so great, the issue so important, that everybody came.

24. **Captain of the temple.** See on Lesson V. The report of the officers was astounding and perplexing.

But the officers again arrested them as quietly as possible, and brought them before the court. They were afraid of mob violence. "Godliness converts men into heroes, ungodliness into cowards."

POPULAR FAVOR is (1) a great power. Even autocrats cannot long override a unanimous people. (2) It is well to make use of this favor for the advancement of the gospel. But (3) it is not wise to trust to it, for it is proverbially fickle, and a very small thing may change the "hallelujahs" to "crucify." (4) It should never be sought as an end. It is worthless except as the result of faithfulness in doing good. Like happiness, it seldom comes to those who pursue it, and the pursuit is degrading.

28. **Did not we straitly.** Strictly. **Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine.** "Noble testimony to the success of their preaching." — *J., F., and B.* How much better to fill Jerusalem with the gospel instead of those things with which it had been filled. **This man's blood.** It was plain that if Jesus was the Messiah, the rulers had been traitors to their nation. It was this charge that stirred them so deeply.

God gave the apostles in this way another opportunity to preach the gospel to the rulers, who could not have been reached in any other way.

THIRD. Peter as spokesman for the others who stood by him; many hearts, but one voice. His address, of which Luke gives a summary, was clear, direct, true, personal. The argument was without a flaw.

1. He reiterates the principle on which they all stand.

29. **We ought to obey God rather than men.** The consciences of the Sanhedrim approved of the principle, however they differed from the application. "Socrates avowed this principle in his defense; and unless the plea be valid, he died as a felon and not as a martyr." — *Hackett.*

2. He charges the rulers with fighting against God. The apostles were patriots; they were on the side of the God of their fathers, and the rulers were arrayed against him.

3. The rulers had done the same before, but had failed. God had given life to him whom they killed, and exalted him whom they rejected.

4. But there was still room for hope and for salvation. They and their nation could be saved.

5. That this was true was proved by a double array of witnesses, the apostles, and the Holy Spirit.

VI. **The Persecutors fighting against God.** — Vs. 33-40. 33. **They were cut to the heart,** "διεπρίοντο, from διά, *through*, and πρίω, *to saw*; hence, *to saw through, to saw asunder;* tropically, in the passive, *to be sawn through mentally, to be rent by passion or vexation, to be exasperated.*" They were in a rage, because their plans were being

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34. Then stood there / But there stood up one in the council, a Phăr'ĭ-see, named [1] Ga-mā'lĭ-el, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among / honour of all the people, and commanded to put the apostles / men forth a little space; / while.

35. And he said unto them, Ye men of Is'ra-el, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. / as touching these men, what ye are about to do.

36. [a] For before these days rose up Theū'das, boasting / giving himself out to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, / dispersed, and brought / came to nought.

[1] Acts 22: 3. *a* The third year before the account called Anno Domini.

thwarted by a common man, who was yet so bold and truthful. Their consciences were touched, and yet they were not willing to obey them. Their souls were a battlefield of conflicting passions. The voice of the spirit was speaking to them. It is not religion that disturbs the soul, but resistance to its mandates. **And took counsel.** Not how they might learn the truth, not how they might be saved from sin, but **to slay them.** As if breaking the alarm bell would put out the fire, or destroying the accuser would bring innocence to the accused.

34. **Then stood . . . up one in the council, a Pharisee,** hence, of a party opposed to the Sadducees who had been leaders of this persecution. But both parties joined in it. The Pharisee's anger might be modified by the blow at the Sadducees' doctrine that there was no resurrection. **Gamaliel,** son of Symeon, and grandson of Hillel, best known to Christians as the teacher of Saul. **Gamaliel . . . (was) had in reputation among all the people** to such a degree, that it was a common saying — *When Gamaliel died, the glory of the law ceased.* He was president of the Sanhedrim during the reigns of the emperors Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius. "It was the tradition of the ancient Greek church from the fifth century that he was converted to Christianity, and baptized, along with his son Abibus and Nicodemus, by St. Peter and St. John. This story of Gamaliel's secret adherence to Christianity goes even much farther back. There is a curious Christian novel or romance, which dates back to close upon the year 200, called the *Clementine Recognitions*, of which there is a translation in H. T. Clark's *Ante-Nicene Library*." — *Professor Stokes.* **Put the apostles forth a little space.** That the discussion might be the more unrestrained, and perhaps that they might not take too much encouragement from his mild words.

35. **And said.** Gamaliel was not inspired; and none of his words, however wise they may be, can be quoted as words of inspiration. It is necessary to bear this in mind because his counsel "to refrain from these men, etc." is often quoted as an inspired utterance, and his words are often spoken of as being the words of Luke. This they are in no sense any more than the words of Gallio, or Felix, or Agrippa (*Bishop Williams*), or the words of Satan in the book of Job, are divinely inspired. **Take heed to yourselves.** Be very careful what you do. Look at the matter from every point of view. Gamaliel proceeds to take example from the recent history of the Jews, from which to learn how to proceed in the present case.

36. **For before these days rose up Theudas.** A Theudas is mentioned by Josephus (*Ant.* XX., 5, 1) who revolted against the Romans; but he places him in A.D. 44 or 45, ten or twelve years after this speech was made. Either Josephus was mistaken as to the date, as Rendall and others think, or the Theudas Gamaliel mentions is a different one from the Theudas of Josephus. There were many such uprisings and false Messiahs about this time. See Matt. 24: 5, 11, and Ramsay's *Was Christ born in Bethlehem*, p. 259. Josephus says, "Meantime numerous seditional movements took place among the Jews, many men feeding their own ambition by the enmity of the Jews against the Romans, and breaking out in acts of war." Moreover, Theudas was not an uncommon name. There could easily have been more than one Theudas leading an insurrection within the half century. Take some modern instances. Professor Stokes mentions two divines at Oxford during the Tractarian movement, beginning there in the thirties; both "named William Palmer, both favoring the Tractarian views, both eminent writers and scholars, but yet tending finally in different directions, for one William Palmer became a Roman Catholic, while the other remained a devoted son of the Reformation. Or to come to still more modern times. . . . A Parnell leads the movement for repeal of the Union in 1890. Ninety years earlier a

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37. After this man rose up Jū'das of Găl'ĭ-lee in the days of the taxing, enrolment, and drew away much some of the people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. scattered abroad.

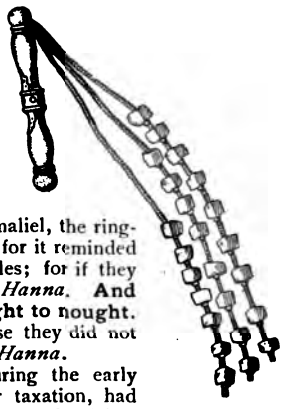
38. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: [1] for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: be overthrown:

39. [2] But but if it be is of God, ye cannot will not be able to overthrow it; them; lest haply ye be found even [3] to fight be fighting against God.

40. And to him they agreed: and when they had [4] called the apostles [5] and beaten them, unto them, they commanded that they should beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jē'sus, and let them go.

[1] Prov. 21: 30; Matt. 15: 13.
[2] Luke 21: 15; 1 Cor. 1: 25.
[3] Acts 7: 51.
[4] Acts 4: 18.
[5] Matt. 10: 17; Mark 13: 9.

Parnell resigned high office sooner than consent to the consummation of the same legislative union of Great Britain and Ireland. We might indeed produce parallel cases without number from the range of history." A similar instance has lately occurred in Natick, Mass. A maiden lady named Mary Ann Morse left $50,000 or more for a public library. A few years after another lady of the same town, named Mary Ann Morse, left $150,000 for a hospital. One was a maiden, the other married into the name, but they were not relatives even by marriage.

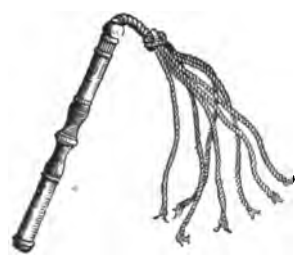


Roman Scourge.

Who was slain. In both the examples furnished by Gamaliel, the ring-leader was slain, — a fact which serves Gamaliel's purpose, for it reminded the council that *they* need not take counsel to slay the apostles; for if they were disturbers, they would naturally come to that end. — *Hanna.* **And all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought.** The reason they were not also slain was probably because they did not wait to come into actual conflict with the Roman forces. — *Hanna.*

37. Judas of Galilee, with Zadock the Pharisee, during the early years of our Lord, when Quirinus ordered a census for taxation, had raised the standard of revolt, with the watchword, "It is not lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar." The Roman land tax was regarded as an insult.

38. Refrain from these men. Do not try to kill them, or to interfere with them by force. **This counsel,** from *con,* "together," and *sulere,* "to consult together," hence, "deliberate purpose or plan." Distinguish from *council* in v. 34, which is from *con,* "together," and *calare,* "to call," "an assembly called together." *Counsel* was the purpose or plan of the apostles, **work** was the execution of the purpose. **Be of men,** of human origin, of worldly purpose, carried on by only human power. **It will come to nought.** Such work as the apostles conducted in their way could not succeed unless God was in it. The whole Roman power would rise against any insurrection or any attempt to raise up a new kingdom. The Sanhedrim could well leave the apostles to them.



Roman Scourge.

39. But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it. You will be overlaboring in vain. **Lest,** if you undertake to put this new sect down by force; **haply,** possibly. **Ye be found even to fight against God.** That is a battle in which no man can win.

ILLUSTRATION. Compare the Norse legends of Thor, in the home of Odin, trying to drain a cup, and finding the ocean behind it, and to lift a cat, and finding it a part of the world-serpent girding the earth. See Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero Worship,* "The Hero as Divinity," and *Suggestive Illustrations* on the Acts, p. 208.

40. And when they had . . . beaten them. "St. Paul, as he tells us in 2 Cor. 11: 24, was five times flogged by the Jews. When the Jews inflicted this punishment the culprit

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41. And they / They therefore departed from the presence of the council, [1] rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame / dishonour for his name. / the Name.

42. And daily / every day, [2] in the temple and in every house, / at home, [3] they ceased not to teach and to preach Jē'sus as the Christ.

[1] Matt. 5: 12; Rom. 5: 3; 2 Cor. 12: 10. [2] Acts 2: 46. [3] Acts 4: 20, 29.

was tied to a pillar in the synagogue; the executioner, armed with a scourge of three distinct lashes, inflicted the punishment; while an official standing by read selected portions of the law between each stroke. Thirteen strokes of the threefold scourge was equivalent to the thirty-nine stripes. This was the flogging the apostles suffered on this occasion." — *Professor Stokes.* The Roman scourging was much more severe. **And . . . commanded . . . them,** as if that would do any good.

VII. **Rejoicing in Persecution.** — Vs. 41, 42. "Set before your pupils the magnificent boldness of Peter and all the rest in the matchless speech (vs. 29–32). There is nothing more sublime in literature. Never fail to show the supernal greatness of Scripture characters. God's people are God-like. Make pupils look for the highest greatness in connection with him, in the Bible and out of it." The apostles were "dignified by indignity, honored by dishonor. They are so great that all that men can do cannot degrade them."

41. And they departed . . . rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. R. V., "the Name." In this they obeyed Christ, who in his beatitude bade them rejoice and be exceeding glad when men persecuted them. (1) When bad men hate and oppose us, we have reason to believe that we have some active goodness and are not living in vain. It places us among the saints and prophets and martyrs. (2) "Great shall be the reward in heaven," for it gives an opportunity of gaining the heavenly character and spirit, the heavenly capacity for joy. Only through battle-fields can come victory and crowns. (3) It gives an opportunity to express our love to Jesus; to prove it to him, to ourselves, and to the world.

42. They ceased not. See Goethe's *Poems*, "Without Haste, without Rest." Tennyson's *Poems*, "The Lotus Eaters." Hawthorne's sketch of the modern Pilgrim's Progress in "A Celestial Railroad," in *Mosses from an Old Manse.*

VIII. **Practical Lessons concerning Persecution.** — 1. WHAT IS PERSECUTION? It is "the infliction of injury (as loss of property or civil rights, physical suffering, or death) as a punishment for adhering to some opinion or course of conduct, as a religious creed or mode of worship, which cannot properly be regarded as criminal." — *Century Dictionary.* "By persecution I mean the employment of any pains or penalties, the administration of any uneasiness to body or mind, in consequence of a man's belief, or with a view to change it. Its essential feature is this, that it addresses itself to the will, not to the understanding; it seeks to modify opinion by the use of fears instead of reasons, of motives instead of arguments." — *J. Martineau.*

2. PETTY PERSECUTIONS. Among young people there are many forms of petty persecution, which ought to be carefully avoided, — sneers and ridicule for any one who is trying to do better, who is strict in morals, who refrains from some popular amusement, who refuses to touch intoxicating drink, who is trying to live a religious life. One such case is related in *Tom Brown at Rugby.* Hazing is often a form of persecution, especially when inflicted on the weak or inexperienced.

NOTE that persecution always has in it an element of meanness. It is the strong overbearing the weak, not in intellect or virtue, but in numbers and popular power.

3. WHAT IS NOT PERSECUTION. Punishment of a crime is not persecution, nor is the refusal to sustain those who hold opinions which we think wrong. We are not persecutors if we refuse to read an injurious book, or to go to a school whose teachings we believe to be erroneous and harmful, or to support a preacher whose doctrines we believe to be an injury to the community.

4. THE TREATMENT OF ERROR. The sentiment of Gamaliel is full of wisdom in regard to the treatment of error. Jesus himself said, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matt. 15: 13). For (1) the very way to exalt error into notice, and to confirm men in it, is to oppose it in a harsh, authoritative, and unkind manner. (2) Error, if left alone, will often die away itself. The interest of men in it will often cease as soon as it ceases to be opposed; and having nothing to fan the flame, it will expire. It is not so with truth. (3) This does not mean that error is to do

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all the talking, and truth never attempt to set the people right. But (4) the power of truth is positive. In the presence of error preach the truth, and live the gospel, taking as little notice of the error as possible. One revival of religion is worth more to put down infidelity than a million books full of unanswerable arguments. Pull up weeds as need be, but he that would have a good garden must pay his chief attention to sowing good seed, and culturing good plants, in the very culture of which the weeds are destroyed.

5. OUR DUTY WHEN PERSECUTED. To go on and do what is right at any cost, but in the spirit of peace and piety and kindness and rejoicing.

6. PERSECUTION A FAILURE. The one way to overcome evil is by good. Only moral weapons can really destroy moral evil. But persecution in the end usually helps the good. It is a sieve that sifts out the chaff from the wheat, the bad seed from the good, both in the community and the individual. Many a man's piety shines brighter, and his strength is increased by opposition.

> "All honor to men who are willing to sink
> Half their present repute for the freedom to think;
> And when they have thought, be their cause strong or weak,
> Will sink th' other half for the freedom to speak."
>
> — *Lowell.*

PERSECUTIONS RING THE CHURCH BELL. Persecution of Christians is like ringing a bell to call all men to see what Christianity does. It is setting a light upon a hill that it may shine far and wide. So Bishop Latimer, bound to the stake, said to Bishop Ridley, "We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out again."

REFERENCE. The picture in *Wycliffe's Bible;* see SELECT NOTES, 1897, p. 58; *Suggestive Illustrations* on Acts, p. 113.



THE CHURCH is like the three men in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace, all unharmed because the Son of God was with them. Like Venus, it was born from the foam of an ocean of opposition; like Hercules, it had to strangle the serpents which assailed it even in its cradle.

ILLUSTRATION. In Mr. Spurgeon's famous address, "Sermons in Candles," is an illustration (p. 165) of a burning candle, on which he sprinkles steel filings. "This candle has fallen upon evil times. I have a bottle here full of black material which is to fall upon the flame of this candle. When I tell you that this bottle contains a quantity of steel filings, you will at once prophesy that the light will be put out. Let us see what will happen. Why, well, instead of putting the candle out, I am making it disport itself as candle never did before. Here we have fireworks, which, if they do not rival those of the Crystal Palace, have a splendor of their own. Do you not think that often when Satan tries to throw dust upon a Christian by slander, he only makes him shine the brighter? He was bright before; now he coruscates. . . . So may we turn the filings of steel into flashes of light."

ILLUSTRATION. SWEEPING OUT THE ATLANTIC. Sidney Smith tells us that in 1824 a great flood set in upon the town of Sidmouth, Eng. The tide rose to an incredible height; the waves rushed in upon the houses, and everything was threatened with destruction. In the midst of this sublime and terrible storm, an old lady who lived upon the beach was seen at the door of her house with mop and pattens, trundling her mop and squeezing out the sea water, and vigorously pushing away the Atlantic Ocean. That is the picture of those who are trying to sweep away the gospel by their opposition and persecution. Dame Partington could more easily sweep out the Atlantic.

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LESSON VIII. — February 23.

THE ARREST OF STEPHEN. — Acts 6: 7-15.

Study Verses 1-15.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul.*** — MATT. 10: 28.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

In tracing the history of the church, we now come to two new stages of its development, and the small beginnings of another which became almost a revolution.

First. — Out of pressing needs grew the first laymen's organization of the church. In a degree it became an institutional church.

Second. — We come to the first Christian martyrdom.

Third. — This, through the persecution and the conversion of Paul, was the early unnoticed beginning of the broadening of the church to the Gentiles.

Fourth. — We gain a glimpse of the inner life of the church, its noble spirit, its new trials as it grew in power and numbers, and its guidance into better things.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

These can be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

The multiplied church.
The cause of discontent.
Good growing out of evil, how and when.
The sudden increase.
Character of Stephen.
The attack upon him.
The shining of his face.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

Wilkinson's *Epic of Saul* finely depicts the character of Stephen and his power as a preacher (Funk & Wagnalls). Tennyson's *Two Voices* contains three stanzas referring to Stephen. Keble's *Christian Year*, "St. Stephen's Day." On the chronology, see Lewin's *Fasti Sacri*; Professor Burton's *Records and Letters of the Apostolic Age*, note 1; and all the books on the Acts. For illustration of v. 7, see E. E. Hale's *Ten Times One is Ten*: on v. 15, Dante's *Paradiso* IX., 13-19. Joseph Cook's *Monday Lectures*, "Transcendentalism." Lightfoot's *Horæ Hebraicæ* gives a full discussion of the distinction between Hebrew and Grecian Jews.

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 7, 8; Matt. 10: 28-31.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: The Noble Christian Layman.

I. THE OCCASION OF A NEW DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHURCH (v. 1).

The multiplied church.
Hebrews and Grecians.

II. THE NEED LED TO A NEW ORGANIZATION OF CHURCH WORK (vs. 2-6).

The qualities needed in church officers.
The order of deacons.

III. THE OUTCOME. RAPID GROWTH IN NUMBERS AND POWER (vs. 7, 8).

The sudden increase.

IV. STEPHEN, THE MARTYR PREACHER (v. 8).

Character, source of his power.

V. THE ATTEMPTS TO PUT AN END TO STEPHEN'S WORK (vs. 9-15).

Two different forms.
The accusation, how false.
The shining of Stephen's face.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. Probably about A. D. 35. Authorities vary from A. D. 31 to 37.

Place. Jerusalem. The trial was in the hall of the Sanhedrim (Acts 6: 12) near the temple. The execution probably was near the brook Kidron, opposite Gethsemane, in the valley between Olivet and the city on the northeast of the city, to which place the Gate of St. Stephen now leads.

PICTURES.

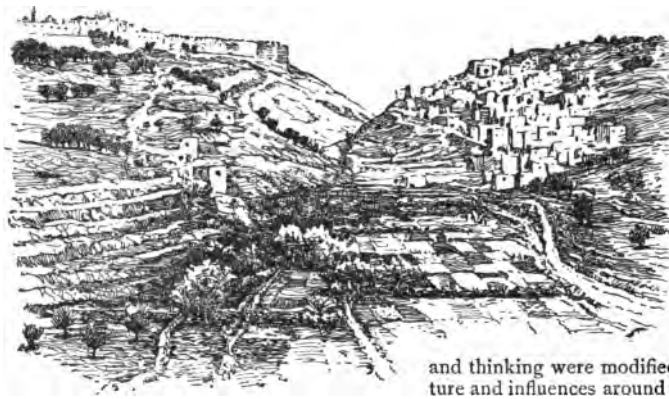
St. Stephen, Francia (Borghese Gallery, Rome); *Consecration of St. Stephen* and *Almsgiving*, Fra Angelico (Vatican); *St. Stephen Preaching*, Fra Angelico (Vatican).

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I. **The Occasion of a New Development of the Church.** — V. 1. **In those days.** A general expression for the period of the great growth of the early church, somewhere between A. D. 33 and 37. **The disciples.** The word occurs here for the first time in the Acts. Disciples are learners, those who go to school to Christ, who accept of him as their teacher, receiving his doctrines, obeying his teachings, following his example, trusting to his guidance. Life is a school in which to be educated for eternal life, Jesus is the teacher, the Bible is the text-book, duties are the lessons to be learned. Were **multiplied.** πληθυνόντων, from πλῆθος, *fulness; a multitude;* hence, *made full, become a great number, multiplied* as the means of making the number great. This is more than "added" of Acts 2: 41.

THE MULTIPLIED CHURCH. There are two ways of multiplying a church. One is to multiply the numbers, on the principle of Ten Times One is Ten; the other way is to multiply the quality of the members, so that each one counts for much more. Ten times a thread makes a small cord, but ten times a rope woven of a thousand such strands is a vastly great power. Ten times a lump of charcoal is of small value, but ten times that same charcoal transformed into a diamond is of vast value. A Christian multiplied by the Holy Spirit, by truth, by character, is like coal multiplied by man's skill into force, warmth, lights, electric cars; or iron multiplied by man into steam-engines, railroads, steamships, cannon, needles, watch-springs, and a thousand other things.

THE HEBREWS AND THE GRECIAN JEWS. Among the early Christians at Jerusalem were two classes of Jews: (1) The native Jews of Palestine, speaking the Aramaic language, a modified form of ancient Hebrew, including those foreign Jews who adhered strictly to their customs and used the Scriptures in the Hebrew language; and (2) the Hellenists or Grecians who were true Jews from foreign lands, who spoke Greek, used the Greek instead of the Hebrew Bible, and whose modes of life and thinking were modified by the Greek culture and influences around them. These latter complained that in the distribution of the funds so abundantly contributed for the poor, their widows were neglected. In that rich soil of open-handed charity several rank weeds suddenly sprang up, to test and exercise the wisdom and faithfulness of the infant church. One of these was real or apparent partiality.



The King's Dale.
The Valley of the Kidron.

1. McGiffert thinks "that the reason for the neglect of the Hellenistic poor lay not in any differences of opinion or of practice, but solely in the traditional attitude of native Hebrews toward their foreign brethren." For "the Hellenists were not always treated by their Palestinian brethren with the same measure of respect that was shown to the Jew who had never made his home among the Gentiles."

2. "It is difficult to believe that the apostles, who shared with St. James of Jerusalem the belief that true religion consisted in visiting the fatherless and the widow in their affliction, could have acted in a spirit of partiality, so that the neglect, if it was due to them, could be attributed to anything else than to their ignorance of the greatness of the need." — *Knowling.* It is quite probable that the Hebrews, who had charge of the distribution, may have been better acquainted with the needs of their own people, and thus have unintentionally given them more than their share of attention.

3. Perhaps, also, more of the money was given by the Hebrews, and that hence the distributors felt that their poor should have the larger share. This mistake, or partiality of the first Christians, has been far too greatly magnified. It was a very small and natural

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error, — a very small blot on the character of these noble Christians; spots on the sun. And there is no greater mistake or injustice than to magnify the spots and forget the shining. **Were neglected.** παρεθεωροῦντο, from παρά, *one side of, beside*, and θεωρέω, *to look at, to contemplate;* hence here, *to look aside from*, so as not to see. They turned their eyes in another direction. **Ministration.** διακονίᾳ, from διάκονος, same word as our *deacon*, commonly derived (though very doubtful) from διά, *thoroughly*, and κόνις, *dust; one who is dusty from running* on messages (*Liddell*); *raising the dust from hastening* (*Thayer*); hence a *servant, attendant, minister.*

II. **The Need led to a New Organization of Church Work.** — Vs. 2–6. As soon as this feeling of dissatisfaction was made known, wise and generous measures were adopted in the most Christian spirit. A general meeting of the church was called. The apostles asked that seven laymen be chosen, for it was not fitting that they should leave their work of preaching the word of God, *to serve tables*, to superintend the distribution of supplies. — *Stokes.*

2. **Called the multitude.** πλῆθος, the same root as the verb for *multiplied* in v. 1. The whole church, not merely the one hundred and twenty. **Serve tables.** Both the tables at which money was collected and distributed, and the tables at which the poor sat, or from which food was distributed. Both in Greek and Hebrew *bankers* are tablers; our word "bankers" means *benchers.*

3. **Of honest report.** μαρτυρουμένους, borne witness to by the church that they had the qualifications referred to, namely, (1) They were men who had proved themselves by their past conduct to be honest and trustworthy, so that the people could put their utmost confidence in them. (2) They were filled with the Holy Spirit, deeply, earnestly religious, abounding in the fruits of the Spirit. By this they showed that they had God's approval. (3) They were men of wisdom and good judgment; common-sense, business-like men.

NOTE. These are the true qualifications of all men who are to be chosen as deacons, or to any other church office, business or devotional; and they exalt the office. The ordinary daily work should be done in the most religious spirit. Phillips Brooks bids us never to fear to do the smallest act with the highest motive. This spirit gives grandeur and glory to the most common-place duties.

THE MINISTER'S DUTY. 4. **We will give ourselves continually to prayer,** the source of their power. It was public and private prayer; the conduct of the worship of the church. **And to the ministry of the word,** preaching and teaching the word of God, which they had learned of Jesus, and which was more and more revealed to them by the Spirit. So Timothy is commanded by Paul to give himself wholly to these things (1 Tim. 4: 15).

THE SEVEN DEACONS. Of these seven we know almost nothing except of Stephen, and of Philip whose work is described in Acts 8. These two did a great deal more than *serve tables.* From the lower duty they rose to a higher. The names were all Greek, but it does not follow that all were Grecians, Hellenistic Jews, for "it was customary among the Jews to have two names, one Hebrew and the other Greek" (*Vincent*). But it was more customary among the foreign Jews, and probably some at least of the seven were Grecian Jews, and were doubtless chosen largely from the complaining party, to make them sure that no injustice had been or was intended. Here, too, a most excellent spirit was shown.

SOME LESSONS. "The Acts of the Apostles is a kind of magic mirror for church history. In the olden times men dreamt of a magic mirror into which one could look and see the course of their future life depicted. We see something of the same in this inspired book." — *Professor Stokes.* Every age has similar difficulties which can be removed by the same principles shown here.

1. We should not be discouraged when we find imperfections in the modern church. Probably the differences between members arise more from misunderstandings than from a desire to do wrong.

ILLUSTRATION. Many, even of good people, speak so much of the faults of Christians that a worldly man would imagine that Christians are mostly made up of faults, — as an astronomer might speak of the spots on the sun. "One man has studied nine hundred and fifty-four groups of spots"; "Captain Davis measured one spot in 1839 which had an area of twenty-five thousand million square miles, and a world thirteen hundred times as large as ours could pass into the opening"; "another was fifty thousand miles in diameter." And a blind man hearing all this, might easily imagine that the sun was chiefly made up of spots, and could do very little good with its shining. They are like the man who "could see a fly on a barn door two miles off, *and not see the door.*"

2. There are diversities of work in the Church of Christ. No one class should absorb

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7. And [1] the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Je-ru'sa-lĕm greatly, exceedingly; and a great company [2] of the priests were obedient to the faith.

[1] Acts 12: 24; Col. 1: 6. [2] John 12: 42.

all the functions and duties. "How many a schism and rent in the visible Church of Christ has been caused because no work, no spiritual function, was found for a newly awakened layman anxious to do something for him who had done so much for his soul." — *Professor Stokes.*

3. We learn how to settle difficulties.

4. We learn how flexible the church organization should be, ready to be adapted to all circumstances and emergencies.

5. We have another example of the way God overrules times of trials and difficulty. The better organization of the church, the office of deacon, and an illustration of adapting our methods to our circumstances all grew out of this early difficulty.

ILLUSTRATION. "To walk through evil into good is one of those hard trials which are never worth the risk. The chance is that we shall stop short in the evil. True, we gain wondrous strength if we succeed, but only an overstrong man now and then struggles through and comes out glowing from the struggle — like John Rogers who, Fox tells us, 'with no cry of pain, washed his hands in the flames as if they had been cold water.'" — *Professor Allen's Life and Letters of Phillips Brooks, from his notes at the age of 20, vol. I., p. 189.*

III. **The Outcome, Rapid Growth in Numbers and Power.** — Vs. 7, 8.

7. **The word of God increased.** Its power extended to many more people, and to other classes, as the priests; the truths of salvation gained wider credence, and changed many hearts and lives. The generosity shown, the love of others expressed, the difficulty healed by a forbearing Christian spirit, was made known as widely as the discontent had spread. The beauty and power of religion was shown in a new light, as the silent, unseen current of electricity, when obstructed by the carbon film, burst out into a brilliant light. **Multiplied.** See on v. 1. **In Jerusalem,** where there was the greatest opposition from the rulers, and where Christ was crucified, and all the facts concerning his resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit were best known. **A great company of the priests.** According to Ezra (2: 36–39), the priests amounted to forty-two hundred and eighty-nine at the time of the return from Babylon. They must have been still more numerous at this period. Such an accession of such converts was a signal event in the early history of the church. — *Hackett.* Josephus says there were twenty thousand priests. The number joining the disciples doubtless included some of the wealthy and prominent (*Knowling*), as well as the mass of the poor, ill-paid priests whose sympathies were largely with the people (*Rendall*). They might continue their temple duties, though the opposition "may well have involved a break with their former profession." They may, like Zacharias and Simeon, have been devout men waiting for the consolation of Israel. **Were obedient.** Imperfect tense, denoting repetition. They kept joining the new community.

Stephen was a prominent example of the converts; and the wonders and signs wrought by him, as well as by the apostles, were manifestations which proved and illustrated to the people the power that was working so mightily and beneficently among the people.

THE SUDDEN INCREASE. Sir Charles Trevelyan, speaking of the pervasion of India with Christian instruction, prophesied half a century ago that "at last, when society is completely saturated with Christian knowledge, and public opinion has taken a decided turn that way, they will come over by thousands." Carey and Judson waited seven long years for their first convert; then came many. The American Baptist Mission worked thirty years among the Telugus in Burmah, with the result of only a handful of converts; so small as almost to cause the mission to be abandoned. Then there came a great ingathering, so that at the end of ten years more, this mission stood forth as one of the most successful missions in the world. See Clarke's *A Study of Missions*, p. 248.

IV. **Stephen, the Martyr Preacher.** — V. 8. As usual, new work developed new men. One of the most active of the seven deacons was a man named Stephen, probably a Grecian (Hellenistic) Jew. It is inferred that he had seen and heard Jesus, for he recognized Jesus glorified, in his death vision.

1. Notice the development of Stephen. He was first of good report, then a "server of tables" and distributor of supplies to the poor, then a preacher of great power, a worker

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8. And Stē'phen, full of faith (grace) and power, did (wrought) great wonders and miracles (signs) among the people.

9. Then (But) there arose certain of them that were of the synagogue, which is the synagogue called *the synagogue* of the Lĭb'er-tĭnes, and of the Cy-rē'nĭ-ans, and of the Al-ĕx-ăn'drĭ-ans, and of them of Ci-lĭ'cia and of A'sia, disputing with Stē'phen.

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of miracles, a martyr, the forerunner of the greatest apostle in Christian history. It was an instance of "To him that hath shall be given." "Thackeray sagaciously hints that there is a law of spiritual harvest; we sow a thought and reap an act; sow an act and reap a habit; sow a habit and reap a character; sow a character and reap a destiny."

2. The source of his power was that he was filled with the Holy Spirit.

ILLUSTRATION. Professor Bruce said of Phillips Brooks, "The man is just a great water main attached to the everlasting reservoir of God's truth and grace and love, and streams of life, as by a heavenly gravitation, pour through him to refresh weary souls." See Professor Allen's *Life of Bishop Brooks*.

3. He was **full of faith**, the faculty through which he received the Holy Spirit, the power and the character which was his.

4. He was "full of grace." The R. V., according to the best manuscripts, has "grace" instead of *faith*. He had the favor of God, and all the gracious influences of the Spirit. His piety and his manner expressed "the beauty of holiness."

5. He was a man of **power**. Grace and *power* do not always go together. Some things are beautiful but not strong. Some things are strong and not beautiful. "How seldom is a Boanerges (Son of thunder) at the same time a Barnabas (a Son of consolation). But the highest characters combine both. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their *strength* . . . and the *beauty of the Lord* God shall be upon them." — From Pres. Mark Hopkins' *Strength and Beauty*.

6. He was a man of deeds. He **did**. Imperfect tense, "was doing"; he kept on doing. He was a man of action as well as preaching. He practised what he preached. "Battles are not won by lectures on gunpowder." **Great wonders**. Proving the power of God that worked in and through him. **And miracles**. Greek, "signs," miracles that were a sign of God's presence and indorsement, and object-lessons of the loving, saving spirit of the gospel.

V. **Attempts to put a Stop to Stephen's Work.** — Vs. 9–15. FIRST ATTEMPT BY ARGUMENT AND DISCUSSION. 9. **There arose**, in a hostile sense. **The synagogue of the Libertines.** *The Libertines* (ἀπελεύθεροι) "were probably Roman 'freedmen' who were formerly captive Jews brought to Rome by Pompey (B. C. 63), (*Tacitus Annals* 2: 85), and afterwards liberated by their Roman masters. These men and their descendants would enjoy the rights of Roman citizenship, and some of them appear to have returned to Jerusalem." — *Knowling* Tacitus speaks of ten thousand Libertine Jews. In our large cities we often have churches of foreign-born people. **Cyrenians**. Cyrene was a great city of the province of Cyrenaica, in North Africa. Josephus relates how one fourth of its inhabitants were Jews. — *Schaff*. **Alexandrians**. The *Alexandrians* were from Alexandria, on the Mediterranean, twelve miles from the mouth of the Nile, a famous philosophical and literary center. — *Abbott*. **Cilicia**. A province of Asia Minor, of which Tarsus was the capital. Paul is supposed to have belonged to this synagogue. **Asia**. Not the grand division, but the Roman province in Asia Minor. It is questioned how many synagogues are here mentioned. The Greek is somewhat peculiar, and leads Knowling, Wendt, and others to think there were only two synagogues named, one of the Libertines together with the Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and the other composed of Jews from Cilicia and Asia. But Meyer, Weiss, Shürer, Hackett, think there were five. It is probable that Paul, then Saul, was among those **disputing with Stephen**, discussing, arguing, the leader and king of oratory and logic.

Professor Wilkinson, in his *Epic of Saul*, sets forth this scene most vividly. He represents Saul as wanting to debate with this young genius as "a foeman worthy of his steel." Saul makes the first address, ending with an eloquent peroration against the blasphemy of thinking that a Galilean carpenter, a crucified felon, could represent "the dazzling splendors of Messiahship." His argument seemed without a flaw.

"Be sure that when *He* comes,
His high degree
Will shine illustrious, like the sun in heaven,
Not feebly flicker, for your fishermen
From Galilee to point it out to you,
With their illiterate 'Lo, here! lo, there!'"

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10. And [1] they were not able to resist withstand the wisdom and the spirit Spirit by which he spake.

11. [2] Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Mō'ses, and *against* God.

12. And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, him and caught seized him, and brought him to him into the council.

13. And and set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law:

[1] Luke 21: 15; Acts 5: 39. [2] Matt. 26: 59.

To accept Christ seemed to abolish Moses, destroy the great traditions of the fathers, to erase their past history, to blot out all their glorious hopes.

But Stephen answers from their own Scriptures, much as is recorded in the next chapter, tearing even Paul's arguments into shreds. Stephen,

> "In guise a seraph rapt, with love aflame
> And all aflame with knowledge, like the bush
> That burned with God in Horeb unconsumed,
> . . . stood and forged
> With ringing blow on blow, his argument
> A vivid weapon edged and tempered so,
> And in those hands so wielded, that its stroke
> No mortal might abide, and bide upright."

10. **And they were not able.** Had not strength **to resist,** "to withstand," his Scriptural arguments that Jesus was the Messiah, as he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to see and to explain. The argument and the power were all on Stephen's side.

THE SECOND ATTEMPT was by means of a false charge before the Sanhedrim. 11. **Then they suborned men,** *ὑπέβαλον, ὑπό, under,* and *βάλλω, to cast or throw;* hence, *to put under,* as carpets under one's feet; hence, *to put one person in place of another, to substitute,* as another's child for one's own, *to employ a secret agent in one's place,* and instigate, or secretly instruct him.—*M. R. Vincent.* The English "suborn" is from the Latin *sub,* "under," "secretly," and *ornare,* "to furnish," or "provide," as a false accusation. **We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses.** The statements charged are given in vs. 13, 14. The blasphemy consisted in contempt of Moses and his institutions. It was a capital offense. See Deut. 13: 6, 10. **And against God,** who instituted the sacrifices, and to whom the temple was dedicated. So Christ said to the Pharisees, "Whoso shall swear by the temple sweareth by it, and him that dwelleth therein."

12. **And they stirred up the people.** Hitherto the opposition was confined chiefly to the rulers whose interests were most affected by the progress of the gospel. Now the leaders had got hold of something which touched the religion and the hopes of the people; and especially when the strictness and the generosity of the Christians troubled the consciences of those who did not wish to act in like manner. Thus **the elders, and the scribes** no longer feared the people, who were divided in feeling, and they **caught him,** *συνήρπασαν, seized, snatched, and carried away with* (*σύν*) *them,* implying violence. They handled him roughly. **Brought him to the council.** The Sanhedrim. They had been discussing in the synagogue, and were not a match for Stephen. Now they brought him before the most learned and powerful body in the nation.

13. **False witnesses.** *False* because they perverted and distorted his words, exaggerated his opinions, and laid a false emphasis on his statements.

ILLUSTRATION. In one room of the Palace of Light at the great Exposition at Paris there was a long row of peculiar mirrors, in which you saw yourself in every odd, peculiar, distorted fashion, except your one natural image. So these people saw the statements of Stephen, changed and distorted by their prejudices and preconceived views.

Against this holy place. The temple adjoining the hall of the Sanhedrim. The same charge was made against Christ (Matt. 26: 61; Mark 14: 58). Probably he said that God could be worshiped acceptably elsewhere, and that if they rejected the Messiah the temple would be destroyed (v. 14). But what he taught was really the glorifying and fulfilling of the temple and the law. It was the Jews themselves who blasphemed the temple by desecrating it, and it was their own hands that destroyed it at last. If he had so spoken against the holy place and the law, "he would," says McGiffert, "have incurred the disapprobation not of the unconverted Jews alone, but of his Christian breth-

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14. [1] For we have heard him say, that this Jē'sus of Năz'a-rĕth shall [2] destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Mō'ses delivered unto us.

15. And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly fastening their eyes on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

[1] Acts 25: 8. [2] Dan. 9: 26.

ren." And in his address emphasis is put upon the sacredness both of the Promised Land and of the Mosaic law."

14. And . . . change the customs which Moses delivered us. Jesus fulfilled these, and clothed their soul in a new body. But he did change the Jews' interpretation of the laws, and removed the excrescences they had fastened upon it, as seen in Matt. 6 and 23.

15. His face as . . . the face of an angel. With the divine illumination of the Holy Spirit, as Moses' face when he had been forty days alone with God. This was God's answer to the charge against Stephen. "It is said of the aged Polycarp, as he faced a martyr's death, that he caught in his closing hours some rays of the glory of the transfiguration." — *Knowling.* See Canon Liddon's *Some Elements of Religion.* "Brightness, calmness, benignity, fearlessness, a look high and far, — such, Dr. Raleigh supposes, must have been at least some of the elements of this 'angel face on man.' And then he goes on to suggest how even we, now and here, may have at least a little of its radiance." — *Wayland Hoyt, D.D.* Dante, describing the angels whom he met in the Paradise, impresses us at once with their external glory and spiritual effulgence. Invariably he makes the former the result of the latter. With closer faithfulness to physical science than he dreamed, he sings: —

"Another of those splendors
Approached me, and its will to pleasure me
It signified by brightening outwardly,
As one delighted to do good;
Became a thing transplendent in my sight
As a prize ruby smitten by the sun."
— *Paradiso IX.*, 13–19.

"Dante says of Beatrice (Divine Wisdom) as he saw her in the paradise, that —

'She smiled so joyously
That God seemed in her countenance to rejoice.'"
— *Paradiso XXVII.*, 105.

"The light that lifted and transfigured him
And glorified, that bright auroral ray
Of genius which forever makes the brow
It strikes on from its fountain far in God,
Shine like the sunrise-smitten mountain peak."
— *Professor Wilkinson.*

"When one that holds communion with the skies,
Has filled his urn where those pure waters rise,
And once more mingles with us meaner things,
'Tis e'en as if an angel shook his wings;
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,
That tells us whence his treasures are supplied."
— *Cowper.*

LIBRARY. Prof. W. C. Wilkinson's *Epic of Saul*, a poem describing the wonderful life-epic of the conversion of St. Paul. It makes the scenes very vivid, and traces the probable course of his inner life. Joseph Cook's *Boston Monday Lectures*, "Conscience," "Solar Self-culture"; Goethe's *Tale of Tales*, in which the fisherman's hut is transformed by the lamps placed within it. "Other things being equal, Cæsar's eye goes down whenever it meets and does not possess the solar look. The veriest sick girl, with this solar light behind her eyeballs, is more than a match for Cæsar without it."

"In guise a seraph rapt, with love aflame
And all aflame with knowledge, like the bush
That burned with God in Horeb unconsumed,
The fervent, pure apostle Stephen stood
In ardors from celestial altars caught,
Kindling to incandescence, — stood and forged
With ringing blow on blow, his argument."
— *Professor Wilkinson.*

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LESSON IX. — March 2.

THE STONING OF STEPHEN. — Acts 7 : 54–8 : 2.

Read Acts 7.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.* — MATT. 5: 44.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

This lesson is the second part or continuation of the last one, the closing of a noble, useful life.

Like Samson, Stephen accomplished more by his death than even by his life. It is said that when the time to die came to one of the old Norse kings, he prepared a ship with all royal insignia, and sailing out to sea toward evening with all sails set, the ship was fired, and his life went up with the flames.

There are many interesting things about the address of Stephen, before we come to the verses printed as the text of the lesson. If possible, persuade the scholars to read this speech two or three times before coming to the class.

Whether they do or not, see that they have their Bibles open before them, so that they can study the chapter while you point out Stephen's plan of defense, and his argument.

THE SECTION

includes the whole of Acts 7 and 8: 1, 2.

The Political Situation. — There was no governor at Jerusalem. Pilate, after ten years of service, having been deposed near the close of A. D. 36.— *Lewin, Fasti Sacri.* The Emperor Tiberius died March 16, A. D. 37, in his 78th year. Hence, everything was in an unsettled state, and mobs were less restrained.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

These can be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

A character study of Stephen.
A study of his address.
Stephen's vision.
The court room scene.
The stoning.
"Fell asleep."
The martyr's crown.

LEARN BY HEART.

Rev. 7: 13–17; Acts 7: 59, 60.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. Immediately after the last lesson, four or five years after the resurrection of Jesus and the gift of the Spirit on Pentecost.

Place. The trial took place in the hall of the Sanhedrim, near the temple at Jerusalem. The execution probably was near the brook Kedron, opposite Gethsemane, in the valley between Olivet and the city on the north-east of the city, to which place the Gate of St. Stephen now leads.

Circumstances. Stephen is on trial before the Sanhedrim for blasphemy and treason against his nation and religion.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT : The Cross and the Crown.

I. STEPHEN'S ADDRESS BEFORE THE SANHEDRIM (vs. 1–53).

Its characteristics.
Its possible errors in the history recounted.
Its refutation of the charges.
Its higher purpose to uphold the truth of Jesus.
The break.
The personal application.
What can be learned from it as to the character of Stephen.

II. THE SCENE IN THE COURT ROOM (vs. 54–57).

The anger of the rulers.
The vision of Stephen.
The condemnation.
Practical.

III. THE MARTYRDOM OF STEPHEN (vs. 58–60; Acts 8: 1, 2).

The stoning scene.
The dying prayer.
Saul standing by.
He fell asleep.
Great lamentation.

IV. THE MARTYR'S CROWN.

Six shining rays.

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THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

The same as in our last lesson. Professor McGiffert's *Apostolic Age*, pp. 86–93; Professor Purves' *Apostolic Age*, pp. 51–55; R. E. Speer's *Studies* in the book of Acts. See note in Professor Knowling's *Commentaries* on Acts, pp. 204–207. Bickersteth's *Yesterday, To-day, and Forever*, on modern martyrs. On the Sanhedrim, see Selden's *Works*, 1 : 1323. Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*.

COMPARE Bishop Latimer's preaching before Henry VIII. (Foster's *Cyclopedia of Illustrations*, 938); Luther before the Diet of Worms (Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero Worship*); Socrates and the Athenians (Plato's *Apology*, p. 23).

PICTURES.

The same as in last lesson. "There is a picture by Vincent Joannes, founder of the Valencian School, of Stephen conducted to the place of execution, representing Saul as walking by his side with melancholy calmness. He consents to Stephen's death from a sincere though mistaken conviction of duty." "Literally, the conception is untrue; poetically, the conception is true." — *R. E. Speer*. See description in Conybeare and Howson's *Life of St. Paul*. *The Martyrdom of St. Stephen*, by Fra Angelico, in the chapel of Nicolo V. in the Vatican at Rome.

I. **Stephen's Address before the Sanhedrim.** — Acts 7: 1–53. FIRST: CHARACTERISTICS. ¶1. The address was almost entirely Scriptural, based on the facts which his auditors accepted.

¶2. It was a historical argument. The light of the past was thrown on the present.

¶3. It was a presentation and interpretation of the course of history, that brought out facts neglected by them, and which shed new light upon the history and its meaning.

4. It was an extempore rehearsal from memory of facts which he learned more from his teachers than from reading of the Scriptures himself, as in those days it was very difficult for a layman to have possession of the Scriptures. Hence, while the great facts are stated correctly, and the course of the history is true, yet there are a few unimportant statements which do not agree with our Scriptures. Alford says there are seven of them. Farrar finds five: (*a*) v. 2, with Gen. 12: 1. But there were doubtless two calls, and it is implied in Gen. 15: 7 that there was a call at Ur, as Stephen says. (*b*) v. 4, with Gen. 11: 26, 32, and 12: 4. Terah was 70 years old when Abraham was born, and Abraham was 75 when he left Haran, which would make Terah 145 years old at that time; but Genesis says he was 205 years old when he died, while Stephen says Abraham did not leave till after Terah died. It is possible that Gen. 11: 26 has been misunderstood, and Abraham is mentioned first because he was the most noted; and not because he was the oldest, which would make a reconciliation possible. (*c*) v. 6, with Ex. 12: 40. "Four hundred years," a round number for 430, just as in Gen. 15: 13, and Josephus, who once uses the 430, but usually the 400. This is no mistake, but just such a use of round numbers as the most accurate persons are continually employing. (*d*) v. 14, with Gen. 46: 27. "Threescore and fifteen," contrasted with 70. Stephen adds, as does the Septuagint, Joseph's five descendants. It is simply another way of counting. As one would say there are 225 in our Sunday school, and another that there are 240; both being right, only one includes the 15 in the afternoon class, and the other does not. (*e*) v. 16, with Gen. 23: 16; Josh. 24: 32. "That Abraham bought." Genesis says that Jacob bought (Gen. 33: 19), and Jacob was buried at Machpelah, not at Shechem. Knowling thinks that Abraham, also, bought at Shechem, where he built an altar when he first arrived in Palestine (Gen. 12: 6, 7), for no devout Hebrew would be content to see a consecrated altar possessed by others. Hence, the purchase follows as natural corollary from the building of the altar. The statement of the burial was either a general statement, or a mistake.

NOTE (1) that so far as there is any mistake, it arose from an extempore address. Luke's business was to record the address, and not to state whether any point was exact or not. Just as in Job the record is not that certain statements are true, but that they were spoken by certain characters.

NOTE (2) that an incidental error in such a case does not impeach the truthfulness of the history or its teachings. W. H. Stead, in his *Bairns' Bible*, illustrates this by a mistake in spelling a word in an arithmetic, which would not show that the arithmetic was wrong in its number teachings. Nor would a scratch or bruise on an electric accumulator affect its ability to give power and light.

SECOND. The address refutes the charges against Stephen, that he spoke blasphemous words against God, and Moses, and the law, and the temple.

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54. [1] When / Now when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their / their teeth.

55. But he, [2] being full of the Hō'ly Ghōst, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jē'sus standing on the right hand of God,

[1] Acts 5: 33. [2] Acts 6: 5.

1. His use of the Bible was a refutation. He knew the Scriptures; he accepted them; he reverently repeated their history. It was like taking the oath of allegiance to his religion and his country.

2. He shows that he accepts Moses as a prophet, and that even his preaching of Jesus as the Messiah was simply the proclamation that Moses' prophecy had been fulfilled, and Moses himself bade them, "Hear ye him." "One of the marked characteristics of the address," says McGiffert, "is the emphasis which is put upon the sacredness both of the Promised Land and of the Mosaic law."

3. He shows them that not himself, but they, are the criminals; that they are doing to Jesus just what their fathers did to Moses and the prophets, whom they now revere. It is they who had "received the law by the disposition of angels and had not kept it."

THIRD. The address was less a defense of himself than of the truth that Jesus was the Messiah. Stephen cared less for himself than for his cause.

He showed that Jesus was the goal of Hebrew history (Purves); he was the fulfilment and culmination of all the past which the Sanhedrim revered. Moses himself foretold the Messiah, and now his prophecy had come true. The people rejected Moses, but he became their deliverer, and brought them to the Promised Land. The rulers were now rejecting Jesus; they had betrayed and murdered him, but still God would make him their deliverer, and he would bring the Messianic kingdom they hoped for. So God delivered Joseph, as he has now delivered Christ. Even in the earliest times there were suggestions of a wider worship than tabernacle or temple, and that vision was now being realized.

FOURTH: THE APPLICATION. There is a sudden change at v. 51, as if the speaker had been interrupted in his argument, and had to leave it unfinished. Stephen's "sharp and abrupt declaration marks the increasing impatience of his hearers," so that he broke off his argument and made an earnest personal application.

Instead of honoring Moses and the law, they were now acting in the spirit of those who persecuted. They were resisting the Holy Spirit as their fathers did. He presented before them a mirror, in which they could see their own characters, like those who looked in the soul-mirror. See also Orlando's remark to Jacques in *As You Like It*, act III., scene 2.

WHAT CAN BE LEARNED OF STEPHEN FROM HIS ADDRESS. (1) His gentle graciousness; (2) his acquaintance with Scripture; (3) his power of logic; (4) his courage and fearlessness; (5) his unselfishness; (6) his zealous temperament; (7) his faithfulness to duty.

II. **The Scene in the Court Room.** — Vs. 54–57. 54. **They were cut to the heart.** διεπρίοντο, from διά, *through, or asunder*, and πρίω, *to saw*. They *were sawn through mentally, all cut up*. Passion raged against passion, and passion against reason. Their hearts were *distracted, torn* with rage, greatly exasperated. The argument was turned against them. They were accused of murdering their Messiah. The one they held a convict became their accuser. His words of truth stung them like scorpions. Before him the whole fabric of their hopes fell "and left not a wreck behind," unless they repented. **They gnashed on him with their teeth,** as if they would like to bite him, an expression of impotent rage, as of the lost in hell (Matt. 8: 12; 13: 42). It was the same demoniac feeling. They snarled like beasts of prey. "'Be ye angry and sin not.' But this anger was *all* sin." — *Professor Barker*.

55. **Being full of the Holy Ghost.** The Greek *being full* implies not a sudden inspiration, but a permanent state. — *Plumptre*. **Looked up stedfastly into heaven.** ἀτενίσας, from α, intensive, and τείνω, *to stretch*; hence, *applying the mind intently to*, on the stretch. Our word "attention" has the same meaning, from *ad, to*, and *tendo*, "to stretch." With mind outstretched and intent he looked into heaven. The tumultuous scene around him, the council hall, and the circle of his infuriated judges all faded from his vision, and he saw the celestial city in its glory, the glory of God, the angels gazing in sympathy, and waiting to welcome him with crowns and harps, and **Jesus standing** (as if ready to help and sustain him, not seated as in Heb. 10: 12) **on the right hand of God,** as if saying,

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56. And said, Behold, [1] I see the heavens opened, and the [2] Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

57. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran rushed upon him with one accord;

[1] Ezek. 1: 1; Matt. 3: 16; Acts 10: 11. [2] Dan. 7: 13.

"Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." He now knew Jesus was alive, and able to sustain him in his trial.

56. And (he) **said.** He told what he saw. It was his hour of triumph.

"Bidding my heart look up not down,
While the cross fades before the crown."

57. Then, enraged by such blasphemy (so they called it) as seeing the one they had crucified, at the right hand of God. Where were they if these things were true? **Cried out with a loud voice.** In order to drown with their clamor such, to them, impious words. So "the drums were beaten to drown the last words of the Scottish covenanters. 'Argyle's sleep' on the night before his execution made his enemies' blood run cold." — *W. Arnot, D.D.* Their action was a practical condemnation of Stephen. It was a rising vote, in addition to any formal vote of the tribunal.

INSIGHT INTO REALITIES. That which Stephen saw through the opened heavens was a greater reality than the angry Sanhedrim or the stones in the valley. These were the veil, the others the realities beyond it. These were the enclosing fog, the others the real scenes hidden within it, and enduring forever after the mists had rolled away. God, heaven, eternity, spiritual things, are far more real than this world's gold or cares or pleasures. We need insight, the blinds of the soul thrown open, the windows cleansed, the veil parted, the spiritual ear-trumpet to hear, the telescope to see with, so that we may live in the presence of the great realities of life. This world without a vision into heaven, this life without a consciousness of eternity, are meager and narrow. The outlook broadens and enlarges the soul.

OUR BRIGHTEST VISIONS often come in our hardest trials. The valley of the shadow of death is often the way to the land of Beulah and the Delectable Mountains. Often from a pillow of stones come, as to Jacob at Bethel, the brightest visions of the soul. From weariness and pain and trouble arise the steps that lead to heaven. Stephen, when stoned by a mob, saw the heaven opened, and Jesus on the right hand of God. Paul from a Roman prison saw his crown of righteousness. Life's Pisgahs and Mounts of Transfiguration are built of the hard rocks of affliction and trial. This is finely expressed in the hymn, "Nearer, my God, to thee."

"The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,
Lets in new light through chinks that time has made."

ILLUSTRATION. A CHINAMAN'S GOOD SERMON. The Chinese character is full of intellectual surprises. A convert to Christianity was called upon to give an illustration of the sacred Scripture, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

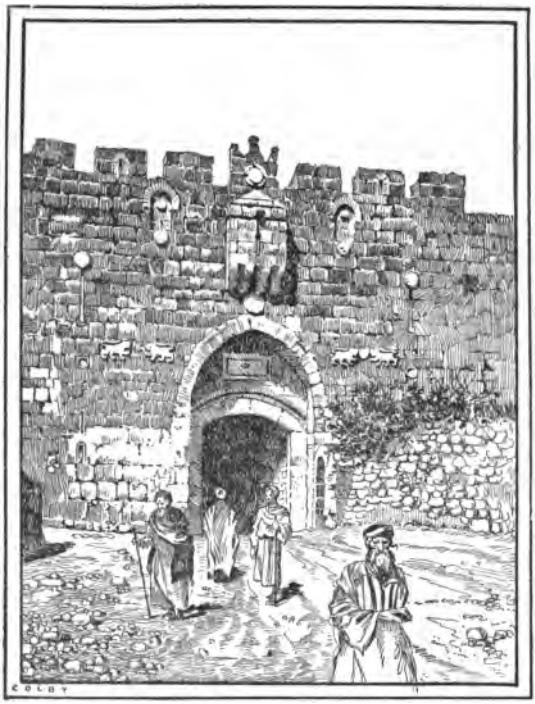
"You say that it is hard to worship a God who cannot be seen," said he, "and that you have no inward evidence of his actuality. A mirror from which all the quicksilver had dropped away might as well complain that it could find no trace of the objects placed before it. Clean thoughts, clean affections, clean desires, have the same function in human nature as the quicksilver on the back of the mirror. When the heart is filled once more with holy thoughts, the perfect image of God will again be seen there." — *Youth's Companion, January, 1901.*

III. **The Martyrdom of Stephen.** — Vs. 57–60; Acts 8: 2. **Ran upon him with one accord.** "Whilst the scene was a tumultuous one, it was quite possible that it was not wholly bereft of judicial appearances" (*Knowling*), for the judicial forms were observed in the stoning. "Wendt points out with much force that an excited and tumultuous crowd might observe some legal forms." — *Knowling.* "We can judge how fierce must have been the rage which turned a solemn Sanhedrim into a mob of murderers." — *Farrar.* The real difficulty lies in the fact that the Roman government did not permit the Sanhedrim to put any one to death. But at this time the Roman government in Judea was in a very unsettled state. Pilate was either deposed (A. D. 36) or was on the point of being so, to

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58. And they [1] cast him out of the city, [2] and stoned him: and [3] the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.

[1] Luke 4: 29; Heb. 13: 12. [2] Lev. 24: 16. [3] Deut. 13: 9; Acts 8: 1; 22: 20.



From a Photograph by Bonfils.

St. Stephen's Gate.

be tried for his misgovernment. Vitellius, governor of Syria, who had caused Pilate to be sent to Rome in disgrace, was anxious to conciliate the Jews. So that it is easy to see how Rome may have connived at the murder of Stephen by the leading Jews. See Knowling, 202, 3, and McGiffert, 91.

58. Cast him out of the city. According to the Mosaic law, malefactors among the Jews were executed without the gates of their cities (Lev. 24: 14). Thus our Lord suffered without the gate.—*Gloag.* The place was somewhere about the rocky edges of the ravine of Jehoshaphat, where the Mount of Olives looks down upon Gethsemane and Siloam (*Howson*), which agrees with Lewin, "They stoned Stephen under the very walls of the temple." There is still a gate in Jerusalem called St. Stephen's Gate, in memory of this deed. "The place of execution was always outside the town — as was, until about seventy years ago, the case in London, the condemned being conveyed from Newgate to Tyburn, a distance of nearly three miles, for execution." — *Kitto.* **And stoned him.** The most severe Jewish punishment, but not allowed by the Romans at this time, without confirmation from the governor. The death of Stephen was a murder, not a legal execution.

STONING. The witnesses placed their hands on the head of the criminal in token that the guilt rested on him (Lev. 24: 14). "The rabbins state that the culprit was stripped of all clothing except a cloth about the loins, and was thrown to the ground from a scaffold about ten feet high by the first witness; the first stone was cast by the second witness on the chest over the heart of the criminal, and if it failed to cause death, the bystanders completed the execution." — *Dr. Davis' Bible Dictionary.* "Stoning was mercy itself when contrasted with the flaying, impaling, and burning alive still practised in Oriental tribunals." — *Tristram.* **And the witnesses.** According to the law of Moses the witnesses were to cast the first stone (Deut. 17: 6, 7), as a guard against making careless or unjust charges. The witnesses here mentioned are those false witnesses who accused Stephen of blasphemy. — *Gloag.* **Laid down their clothes.** Their outer garments, the cloaks or mantles, leaving on only the under garment or tunic. — *Abbott.* In order that they might have the free use of their arms in hurling the stones. — *Hackett.* **At a young man's feet.** νεανίου, used to denote any man of an age between twenty-four and forty. Josephus applies the term to Agrippa I., when he was at least forty. — *Ant. XVIII. 6, 7.* **Whose name was Saul.** The same who became afterwards the great apostle to the Gentiles. According to Lewin, he was probably thirty-four or thirty-five years old at this time. He was

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59. And they stoned Stē'phen, [1] calling upon *God, the Lord,* and saying, Lord Jē'sus, [2] receive my spirit.

60. And he [3] kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, [4] Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

[1] Acts 9: 14
[2] Psa. 31: 5; Luke 23: 46.
[3] Acts 9: 40; 20: 36; 21: 5.
[4] Matt. 5: 44; Luke 6: 28.

probably a member of the Sanhedrim, and active in condemning Stephen. See Acts 26: 10.

ILLUSTRATIONS. When Savonarola stood at his funeral pile on the great square of Florence, before his burning, on May 23, 1498, and the bishop spoke the words of ecclesiastical excommunication, "I separate thee from the church," the martyr's face lighted up joyously as he responded, "From the church militant, but not from the church triumphant." In the Pitti Gallery of Florence is a picture of St. Sebastian fastened to a tree with the death arrows sticking in his body, but also there are two angels sweeping down from heaven bearing a crown.

59. And they stoned Stephen. "They went on stoning while he was praying." — *Cook.* "They stone one witness, but God is preparing another to take his place." — *Starke.* **Receive my spirit.** Into the mansions Jesus had gone to prepare; to his own heart and home.

60. And he kneeled down. While they were stoning him, he rose up on his knees. **And cried with a loud voice,** so that his persecutors could hear him, and understand his spirit, **Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.** "And the prayer for his murderers is identical in spirit with Christ's upon the cross." — *Butler.* Rendall says this "presents a striking contrast to the spirit of his previous defense." "The vision of his Lord had filled his mind and heart." The contrast is only in form, not in spirit, like Jesus' "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees," and his "Father forgive them" from the cross. Both grew out of the same loving spirit.

COMPARE the last words of Dr. Payson. See his Life, and *Suggestive Illustrations* on Acts, p. 472; see also pp. 168–177.

And . . . he fell asleep (ἐκοιμήθη). "Marking his calm and peaceful death. Though the pagan authors sometimes used *sleep* to signify *death*, it was only as a poetic figure. When Christ, on the other hand, said, 'Our friend Lazarus *sleepeth* (κεκοίμηται), he used the word not as a figure, but as the expression of a *fact*. In that mystery of death, in which the pagan saw only nothingness, Jesus saw continued life, rest, waking — the elements which enter into sleep. And thus, in Christian speech and thought, as the doctrine of the resurrection struck its roots deeper, the word 'dead,' with its hopeless finality, gave place to the more gracious and hopeful word 'sleep.' The pagan burying-place carried in its name no suggestion of hope or comfort. It was a burying-place, a hiding-place, monumentum, a mere memorial of something gone; a columbarium, or dove-cot, with its little pigeon-holes for cinerary urns; but the Christian thought of death as sleep brought with it into Christian speech the kindred thought of a chamber of rest, and embodied it in the word 'cemetery' (κοιμητήριον), *the place to lie down to sleep.*"—*M. R. Vincent* in *Word Studies.*

The one who sleeps is alive, and awakes the same person who lay down to sleep.

ILLUSTRATION. THE BUGLE SOUNDING TAPS, and the words which have descended from time immemorial among soldiers: —

"Love, good night!
Must thou go
When the day and the night
Need thee so?
All is well! Hasten all
To their rest!"



From a Photograph.

Place of the Stoning of St. Stephen (Jerusalem).

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1. And [1] Saul was consenting unto his death. And [at that time there was / there arose on that day] a great persecution against the church which was [at / in] Je-ru'sa-lĕm; and [2] they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Jū-dæ'a and Sa-mā'rĭ-a, except the apostles.

2. And devout men [carried / buried] Stē'phen, [to his burial,] and [3] made great lamentation over him.

[1] Acts 7: 58. [2] Acts 11: 19. [3] Gen. 23: 2.

A soldier of the Grand Army said lately, "When I die do not sound taps over my grave, but reveillé, the morning call, the summons to rise."

"Say not good night, but in some brighter clime
Bid me good morning."

8: 1. And Saul was consenting unto his death. The word implies hearty approval. He probably voted against him, and spoke against him in the Sanhedrim, besides being among his murderers. **At that time.** The original literally implies "on that very day," as in the R. V; immediately after the stoning. **There was a great persecution against the church.** The severity and the variety of suffering may be imagined from James' description (Jas. 2: 6, 7), and Paul's in 2 Cor. 11: 23–25. **They were all scattered abroad.** For the extent of the dispersion, overruled to the enlargement of the church, see Acts 11: 19, 20. It was not merely the result of panic, but in obedience to Christ's command (Matt. 10: 23).— *Cook.* **Throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria,** where they would be less exposed to persecution than at Jerusalem.

2. And devout men, including both Jews, as Gamaliel and Nicodemus, and Jewish Christians.— *Knowling.* **Made great lamentation,** some as a protest against the lawless and rash acts of the majority; while the whole Christian church would lament over the loss of such a godly and useful man.

IV. **The Martyr's Crown.** — 1. THE THREE CROWNS. Stephen's name signifies in Greek, *a crown.* "He received three crowns: (1) The beautiful crown of grace with which the Lord adorned him. (2) The bloody crown of thorns, which, like his Saviour, he wore in suffering and in death. (3) The heavenly crown of honor." — *Strauss.*

2. Stephen's Christian life was short, but he accomplished more than most men had they lived as long as Methuselah.

"He liveth long who liveth well;
All other life is short and vain;
He liveth longest who can tell
Of living most for heavenly gain."

3. Stephen's success lay in the fact that he preserved his manhood and his character untarnished amid great temptations. He was a hero. He was gold tried in the fire. No man's life is a failure who is himself a moral success, and is a victor on the battlefield of the heart. "Shakespeare," says Dowden, "beats triumphal marches, not for successful persons alone, but also for the conquered and the slain."

4. Stephen has part in the triumphs of Christianity through the ages. His example is a star which never ceases to shine. He holds up before all men an ideal of heroism, courage, faithfulness to duty. He is a perpetual inspiration.

"Oh, may I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence; live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
For miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
And with their mild persistence urge man's search
To vaster issues."
— *George Eliot.*

5. In heaven he wears the victor's crown, and dwells forever in the joy of his Lord, eating of "the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God," "a pillar in the temple of my God," having "the morning star" and "the new name."

"If thou wilt be a hero, and wilt strive
To help thy fellow and exalt thyself,
Thy feet, at last, shall stand on jasper floors;
Thy heart, at last, shall seem a thousand hearts—
Each single heart with myriad raptures filled—
While thou shalt sit with princess and with kings,
Rich in the jewel of a ransomed soul."

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LESSON X. — March 9.

THE DISCIPLES SCATTERED. — Acts 8: 3-13.

Study Verses 3-17. Read Acts 8: 18-25.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word.*** — ACTS 8: 4.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

This lesson is linked to the last as effect to cause. The great efforts to destroy the new religion caused it to increase as the man who in anger stamped the seed into the ground helped it to grow.

The church had been in existence now for several years. It had grown so strong and was rooted so firmly that the time had come for a new departure.

As usual the NEW EPOCH came through an outward disturbance, a providential leading.

It was an era of HOME MISSIONS, the extension of the gospel to other fields, and a broadening of view as to the nature and work of the gospel. It was the first of several steps toward the universal spread of the gospel.

Like a river, it broadens and deepens as it flows on toward the sea. It overflows obstacles within and without, and gains in power and blessing.

THE SECTION

includes Acts 8: 1-25.

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Pliny's letter to the Emperor Trajan, concerning the spread of Christianity and the persecution of Christians, in Ramsay's *Church in the Roman Empire*. The letter was found in Paris about 1500. Quoted in *Suggestive Illustrations* on Acts. The persecutions under Nero, as described by Tacitus, also quoted by Professor Thatcher, *Apostolic Church*, pp. 280-287. See also *Quo Vadis*. Vedder's *The Dawn of Christianity*. "On the general subject, chap. 18 of the *Expositors' Acts* will be found particularly stimulating and useful." Neander's *Planting and Training of the Christian Church*, book II., gives a full account of Simon; Professor Stifler's *Introduction to the Acts* is very suggestive.

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 4, 22, 23; Mark 16: 15.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. The months following the last lesson, A. D. 35-37.

Place. The city Samaria, the capital of the district of Samaria.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

These can be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

Persecution as a sieve and test.
Philip.
Simon Magus, a character sketch.
Magic.
The Pentecostal gift.
The Samaritan bridge.
The gall of bitterness.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: The Extension of the Gospel. The Trials and Triumphs of a Home Missionary.

I. THE GREAT PERSECUTION AND ITS UNINTENDED RESULTS (vs. 1-4).

Sifting, testing, spreading the gospel, developing character, extending the work.

II. THE WORK OF DEACON PHILIP, THE HOME MISSIONARY (vs. 5-8).

Teaching, preaching, healing, joy.

III. THE UNWORTHY CONVERT, SIMON MAGUS (vs. 9-24).

The magician.
The delegation from Jerusalem.
The Pentecostal gift.
The Samaritan bridge from Jews to Gentiles.
Simony.
The gall of bitterness.

PICTURES.

The Apostles preaching the Gospel, Doré; *Christian Martyrs in the Coliseum*, Gerome.

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3. As for But Saul, 1 he made havoc of laid waste the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

4. Therefore 2 they They therefore that were scattered abroad went every where about preaching the word.

[1] Acts 7: 58; 9: 1, 13, 21; 1 Cor. 15: 9. [2] Matt. 10: 23; Acts 11: 19.

I. The Great Persecution and its Unintended Results. — Vs. 1–4. The martyrdom of Stephen was the beginning of the first general persecution of Christians. The circumstances described in our last lesson, growing out of the unsettled state of the Roman government, the accusations against Pilate, and his summons to Rome for trial, followed soon by the death of the Emperor Tiberius, gave an opportunity for the Jewish leaders to carry on their persecutions; for this first persecution was by the Jews, not the heathen.

THE SEVERITY of the persecution is seen in the activity of Saul, who (3) **made havoc of the church.** ἐλυμαίνετο, from λύμη, *injury, ruin;* hence, *devastated the church*, as an army devastates the country it overruns, or as wild beasts ravage a garden, or field of grain, or a pasture where they destroy the sheep. "In the Septuagint of Psa. 80: 13, it is used of the laying waste of a vineyard by the wild boar." **Entering into every house.** No place was safe from the persecutor; no man's "house was his castle." **Haling.** Old English for hawling, dragging out by violence. This form of the word is still used in *hal*-yards. "Paul's own statements confirm this description. He thought 'he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth . . . in Jerusalem . . . he shut up many of the saints in prisons' (Acts 26: 9, 10). Women also suffered, — a fact three times repeated as a great aggravation of his cruelty (Acts 9: 2; 22: 4). Stephen was not the only one who suffered death (Acts 22: 4; 26: 10). Paul 'persecuted the church beyond measure' (Gal. 1: 13), and used every effort to make the Christians blaspheme that Holy Name whereby they were called (Acts 26: 11). His fame as an inquisitor was notorious far and wide; Ananias of Damascus had heard how much evil he had done to the saints at Jerusalem (Acts 9: 13–21; see Phil. 3: 6; 1 Tim. 1: 13; 1 Cor. 15: 9)." — *Revision Com.*

4. **Scattered abroad.** διασπαρέντες, from διά, *thoroughly, in all directions*, and σπείρω, *to sow, to scatter like seed.* They were as *seed scattered in all directions* by the farmer sowing his field broadcast. They went through Samaria, Galilee, and as far as Phœnicia, Antioch, and Cyprus. **Preaching the word.** The persecution not only sent them over the country, but opened the way, in each town or village where they found shelter, for speaking about Jesus and his gospel; for they must explain why they left Jerusalem, and were now wanderers. Their persecution would excite the sympathy of many. Compare, for an example of the same principle, Desdemona's attraction to Othello, act I., scene 3. Many would be devout and earnest to know the truth, and were waiting for the larger hope.

FIRST. Persecution, opposition, difficulties, ridicule, are a sifting process. They keep away most hypocrites, and prevent the careless and the ungodly from joining the movement from unworthy motives, or from the current of popular feeling. The wind that makes the real fire burn brighter blows away the imitation, and cools whatever is heated only from without.

SECOND. Such things reveal us to ourselves. Oftentimes the young convert has felt with the hymn:—

"'Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought, —
Do I love the Lord, or no,
Am I his or am I not."

But serving God when it costs to serve him, and working for Jesus in spite of opposition and temptation, prove to ourselves that we love him, and aid us to the assurance of faith and hope. This is one reason for the fact noted by Rev. Mr. Blakeslee, that, "while many of the disciples, in addition to their bodily sufferings in the persecution, probably lost their possessions, none of them seem to have lost their faith; but wherever they went they carried with them and sought to impart to others that confidence in Jesus as the Messiah which strengthened them in their trials and comforted them in their sorrows."

THIRD. Persecution is often one of the means God uses for the spread of the gospel. This is not saying that persecution is ever right. It is always wrong. But if men will do wrong things, they shall be compelled also to do good.

EXAMPLES. "When Tyndale published at Worms his first complete edition of the New Testament he sent several hundred copies to England. These, by command of Henry

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5. Then And unto them. Phĭl'ĭp[1] went down to the city of Sa-mā'rĭ-a, and preached Christ proclaimed unto them the Christ.

6. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Phil'ip spake, hearing and multitudes gave heed with one accord unto the things that were spoken by Phil'ip, when they seeing the miracles heard, and saw the signs which he did.

[1] Acts 6: 5.

VIII. were bought up for destruction by the Bishop of London. Tyndale thus viewed it: 'I shall get money of him for these books to buy up myself out of debt, and the whole world shall cry out at the burning of God's word, and the overplus of the money shall help me to correct again and newly to imprint the same.' Presently a more accurate edition reached England in threefold numbers." — *R. R. Doherty, Ph.D.*

When Prince Napoleon was at Leghorn, during the Italian war, he was accompanied by M. About, a literary man of rising reputation. About was asked how his book, *The Roman Question*, was selling. "Only five or six copies have been sold," replied About. A friend suggested that Napoleon could help the sale by putting it under ban, forbidding it to be sold. He did so. The next day the *Moniteur* announced that *The Roman Question* was seized by the government; and fifteen thousand copies were sold at once.

FOURTH. It enlarged the church in its quality, character, and power. It broadened the vision and widened the view. "The safety and happiness of the church depend thus, under God, on its efficiency as an aggressive force upon the world. Stagnation is death. The physical philosopher tells us that *heat is only a form of motion;* and the warmth of Christian love is only one of the forms of Christian activity. The *pool* is very soon corrupt, but the *river* filters itself into purity as it flows, and sings the while a sweet song in the ear of God." — *Wm. M. Taylor.* "Until this time, the company of believers was almost entirely limited to the city of Jerusalem; their love for the Holy City, their lingering Jewish prejudices, the comfort of each other's society — all would have served to retain them there had it not been for this persecution." — *Pierce.* So that it would have become a short-lived, narrow sect, and not a universal religion. Thus this persecution kept the church from the danger of stagnation, and of living for itself, seeking its own good. It brought in new work, new activities, new interests. "Uninterrupted prosperity and growth might have been fatal to the development of the finer Christian graces, humility, trust, patience, and purity." New work and new circumstances would develop new graces and new powers, and complete their Christian character.

FIFTH. Many were set to work who would otherwise have remained comparatively useless. Going into a new church, having several small churches instead of one great one, moving from an old, thickly settled country into new regions, — these things develop many a person, and reveal in him powers and characteristics that before had lain dormant.

LIBRARY. See Whittier's *Poems*, "The Two Rabbis."

"Heaven's gate is shut to him that comes alone.
Save thou a soul, and it shall save thine own."

II. **The Work of Deacon Philip, the Home Missionary.** — Vs. 5–8. Not the apostle of that name, but the evangelist, one of the seven deacons chosen to aid the apostles (Acts 6: 5). Of his previous history we know nothing. Besides this work recorded in this chapter, we find him later a resident of Cesarea, with four daughters gifted in speaking to the people (Acts 21: 9). Paul and Luke visited them at their home here, and Luke may have learned about his work from the evangelist himself. 5. **The city of Samaria.** The capital of the district of Samaria, built by Omri, the father of King Ahab. **And preached** (ἐκήρυσσεν), proclaimed the **Christ**, the Messiah, **unto them.** Simon was the leader of the opposition (v. 9), but apparently Philip took no direct notice of him. "What did Philip do? He preached CHRIST. Philip did not argue down Simon: he *superseded* him. The daylight does not *argue* with the artificial light: it outshines it; it makes it useless."

6. **The people with one accord.** ὁμοθυμαδόν, from ὁμός, *together*, and θυμός (from θύω, *to rush along*), *feeling, passion, ardor, glow;* hence, *with one mind, one feeling, one accord.* **Gave heed.** (1) It is quite possible that Philip may have reaped a harvest from the seed sown by Jesus himself, nearly ten years before (John 4) in a city of the same region. The seeds of truth often spring up after lying dormant for years. (2) Another reason for the welcome of the gospel may lie in the fact of the cordial love and equal treatment by the Christians. So different from that of the Jews, who had no dealings with the Samaritans. (3) The gospel itself. **Hearing** the gracious words of eternal life, and of the effects of

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7. For [1] unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed *with them*: *from* many of those which had unclean spirits, they came out, crying with a loud voice: and many taken with palsies, that were palsied, and that were lame, were healed.

8. And there was great (much) joy in that city.

[1] Mark 16: 17.



From a Photograph by Wilson.

Samaria.
Ruins, Church of St. John.

the gospel upon those who had embraced it at Jerusalem. (4) **Seeing the miracles.** The signs of their divine authority, of their power for help, of the loving, helpful nature of the gospel they preached.

7. **Unclean spirits.** So called because they defiled and degraded both the body and soul of those they possessed. These were the most difficult cases, and with the paralytic and the lame manifested the divine power.

NOTE how closely these healings were connected with the gospel. It is probable that a "tree of healing" that would cure all bodily diseases, without any regard to character, would be a curse to mankind. Thus Bulwer, in his *Lost Tales of Miletus*, "Death and Sisyphus," represents Death as clasped in the Debtor's Chair, and unable to destroy men, with the result that not a single prayer rose to God; and to the red lightnings of divine wrath, "Blaze on," the felon said, "ye cannot kill." The Tree of Healing must be close by the Tree of Life, and lead men nearer to God and to heaven. **Palsies.** Cases of paralysis.

THE ATTRACTIVE POWER of these miracles was threefold: (1) They delivered from very real and great evils; (2) They were signs and object-lessons of the work of the gospel which Philip preached; (3) They were proofs of his authority, and of the power of God to save from sin and evil here and hereafter.

POWER OVER EVIL SPIRITS in all forms, especially those that dominate many souls of men, such as the evil spirits of war, intemperance, sensuality, ambition, selfishness.

SIGNS. They are signs and expressions of the great work Christ has come to do, illustrating the need of casting out devils in modern times and the way in which it can be done.

MEDICAL MISSIONS. "I have said that medical work takes the place of miracles in the apostolic age. It does more. Miracles proved the power of God and the apostolate of man. But medical work in connection with missions proves that the apostle has the spirit of his Master, and shows what the power of God can do to make man God-like." — *Prof. Geo. E. Post, M.D.*

LIBRARY. Phillips Brooks' *Sermons*, series 6, "The Battle of Life"; R. F. Horton's *Cartoons of St. Mark*, "The Cartoon of Disease and Death"; Dr. Nevius' *Demon Possession*; Dr. Trumbull's *Studies in Oriental Social Life*.

8. **And there was great joy.** R. V., "much joy," both in depth and extent; great in quality, much in extent. Everything in this religion conduced to joy, — the joy of health, the joy of being saved from sin, joy like the angels in the conversion of sinners, joy of reconciliation to God, joy of fresh new life, joy of Christian activity.

LIBRARY. Professor Drummond's *Pax Vobiscum*, pp. 50–58, "How Fruits Grow," especially the fruit of the spirit, Joy; Spurgeon's *Salt-Cellars*, p. 61, "On Joy in

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9. But there was a certain man, called Si'mon, Si'mon by name, which beforetime in the same city [1] used sorcery, and bewitched amazed the [a] people of Sa-mā'rĭ-a, [2] giving out that himself was some great one:

10. To to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great that power of God which is called Great.

11. And to him they had regard, they gave heed to him, because that of long time he had bewitched amazed them with his sorceries.

12. But when they believed Phĭl'ĭp preaching the things good tidings [3] concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jē'sus Chrīst, they were baptized, both men and women.

[1] Acts 13: 6.
[2] Acts 5: 36.
[3] Acts 1: 3.
a Greek, *nation.*

Religion"; Earle, in his *Bringing in the Sheaves*, relates two incidents of the power of a joyful Christian life.

III. **The Unworthy Convert, Simon Magus.** — Vs. 9–24. Remembering that Luke once spent several days with Philip (Acts 21: 8), we can easily understand how he may have received this narrative from Philip himself. **9. A certain man, called Simon.** Little is known of him. Neander identifies this Simon with one mentioned as living from ten to twenty years after this by Josephus, and as having been employed by the procurator Felix to tempt Drusilla to leave her husband (King Azizus) and live with him, which she did (Acts 24: 24). Simon is there called "a Jew, born in Cyprus." — *Alford.* Knowling and Rendall think there is no ground for this identification. **Used sorcery.** μαγεύων, from μάγος (*magos*, whence our word "magic"), denoting the acts of "wise men" who interpreted dreams. Hence, the word came to denote any enchanter or wizard, and in a bad sense, a juggler, a quack. Simon doubtless exercised the same arts as the modern fortune-teller, with, perhaps, a knowledge of chemistry and the powers of hypnotism, mesmerism, and of our spiritual mediums, together with the sleight-of-hand performances common here, and especially in India. Many of these effects are very wonderful, and it is not strange that he *amazed them.* "The Jews," says Professor Stokes, "were everywhere celebrated at this period for their skill in magical incantations; while, as is well known from references in the classical writers, the Jews at Rome were famous for the same practices." **And bewitched.** ἐξιστῶν, literally, *to put out of place, to put out of one's senses*, as in Mark 3: 21 the word is translated, *he is beside himself;* hence it means *amazed*, far beyond their ordinary conditions; he confounded their judgment. **That himself was some great one.** "According to Irenæus I., 23, 1, Simon claimed to combine in himself the Three Persons in the Trinity, alleging that he appeared to the Jews as the Son, to the Samaritans as the Father, and among the Gentiles as the Holy Ghost." — *Bible Com.* "It may be that he set himself up for the Messiah." — *Knowling.* "*Ego sum sermo Dei, ego sum speciosus, ego paraclitus, ego omnipotens, ego omnia dei.*" — *Jerome.* Sidney Smith, I think it was, said of a man who felt his importance, that "when he walked east he thought the world tipped up west." Contrast this man who preached himself, with Philip who preached Christ.

10. This man is the great power of God. "Amongst the powers of God Simon was emphatically the one called great." — *Knowling.* "'Powers' was a word current to express angelic or heavenly influences." — *Cambridge Bible.*

11. To him they had regard. In the hope that he might be the long-looked-for deliverer. When they saw this candle in the darkness, they were ready to believe that it was a star shining from heaven.

12. But when they believed Philip. When they saw the true light, they turned from the feeble worldly light that had attracted them before. (1) Philip's teaching met their needs, brought forgiveness and salvation, hope and joy. (2) Philip's works were not only more wonderful, but more gracious, more loving, more divine; and they were such that all possibility of deception was removed. (3) Simon's produced wonder, but he did not bring religion. He touched the mind, but left the heart as it was. (4) Simon was selfish, seeking money and honor; Philip sought nothing for himself, but only the good of others. **They** (the believers) **were baptized.** According to the command of Christ, as the outward condition of admission to the kingdom of Christ. It is the rite of profession. No better way of public profession of Christ can be found than by this of Christ's own

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13. Then / And Sī'mon also himself believed: also: and when he was / being baptized, he continued with Phĭl'ĭp; and wondered, / beholding the miracles and signs which were done, signs and great a miracles wrought, he was amazed.

14. Now when the apostles which were at Je-ru'sa-lĕm heard that Sa-mā'rĭ-a had received the word of God, they sent unto them Pē'ter and Jŏhn:

15. Who, / who, when they were come down, prayed for them, [1] that they might receive the Hō'ly Ghōst:

16. (For 2 as yet he was fallen upon none of them : only 3 they were baptized in 4 the name of the Lord Je'sus.) for as yet he was fallen upon none of them : only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Je'sus.

17. Then [5] laid they their / their hands on them, and they received the Hō'ly Ghōst.

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[1] Acts 2: 38.
[2] Acts 19: 2.
[3] Matt. 28: 19; Acts 2: 38.
[4] Acts 10: 48.
[5] Acts 6: 6; Heb. 6: 2.
a Greek, *powers*.

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ordaining. "The tense points not to one great act, but to the continual succession of converts who were thus admitted." — *Plumptre.* **Both men and women.** "We think of the woman of Samaria of John 4: 7, and wonder whether she was one of them." — *Plumptre.*

13. Then Simon himself believed also. He believed that Jesus was the Messiah. He knew all about the tricks of magic, and the character of magicians, and he knew that miracles wrought in the name of Jesus were real and divine. "Yet this faith of his was only historical and intellectual, without having as its result a change of the inner life; hence, he was soon afterwards capable of what is related in vs. 18, 19." — *Meyer.* "It was a belief about the facts and not a belief in him whom the facts made known, a belief in the *power* of the new faith, but not an acceptance of its *holiness*." — *Knowling.* It was without heart, without giving up all to Jesus, without accepting him as his Saviour, guide, teacher, and Lord. **He was baptized.** Thus making a public profession of his faith. Perhaps he was self-deceived, and thought that he possessed the same faith as the others, and knew all about religion. **And wondered.** Showing the kind of belief he had.

THE DELEGATION FROM JERUSALEM. **14. The apostles . . . sent unto them Peter and John.** Not as rulers, but as a friendly delegation of leading apostles who could be trusted. The early Christians were sufficiently conservative, but yet had open minds to the guidance of God's providence, though they were not so progressive as to neglect to study carefully the facts. The object of the delegation seems to have been to obtain a true report of the strange doings in Samaria, which, if true, must change the views of the Christian church. Were these true conversions? Should the Samaritan converts be received and welcomed in spite of the barriers between Jews and Samaritans, "who have no dealings" with one another (John 4: 9)? Besides this, Peter and John could give wise counsel to the new converts, and further instruction in the teachings of Jesus, and confer some spiritual gifts. "John *once*," says Barnes, "would have called down destroying fire upon the Samaritans (Luke 9: 54). Now he gladly seeks to bring upon them the blessed baptism of fire from the Holy Ghost."

THE PENTECOSTAL GIFT. The two apostles found that the conversions were real, but that the converts had received only a portion of the blessings of the gospel. "There was more to follow."

15. Prayed for them. The best spiritual gifts come through prayer. **That they might receive the Holy Ghost.** Not the ordinary influences of the Holy Spirit who had already convicted them "of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment," and changed their hearts so that they were "born anew of the spirit"; but the larger special gifts of the spirit for greater devotion, for power in service as Jesus had promised (Acts 1: 8), and, in fuller degree, the "divine indwelling of the Spirit which makes the Christian the temple of God (Gal. 3: 2; Rom. 8: 15)." — *Knowling.*

17. Then laid they their hands on them, to express that the gift came from God through his apostles. It was a connecting link between the giver and the receiver. **And they received the Holy Ghost,** probably with the outward manifestations of Pentecost, and the inward grace which they represented. For it is plain from Simon's request that there must have been some "visible and audible phenomena, as was common in the apostolic age." . . . "Simon would never have offered money for a power that produced effects which might as easily be produced in other ways, and which gave no clear indication of supernatural influence." — *McGiffert.*

The special reasons for this gift were much the same as on its first bestowal at Pente-

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cost. (1) It expressed clearly the inward grace and power, so that both those who received it, and all others, might realize the fact of the unseen gift, as the spark or the lightning reveals the presence of electricity. (2) The new church, under new circumstances, needed the power, and gifts and fresh life bestowed. (3) It proved to the Jewish disciples, and especially to the church at Jerusalem, that the Samaritan movement was from God, and approved by the Saviour and Master.

THE SAMARITAN BRIDGE FROM JEWS TO GENTILES. The greatest epoch in the early church, and one essential to the gospel, was to be the reception of the Gentile Christians without their first becoming Jews. A great gulf lay between them which it seemed impossible to bridge. All were willing enough that Gentiles should become *Jewish* Christians, but they did not see how to welcome them as Gentile Christians. How could they join in eating and in social life with those whose food was forbidden, with whom an intermarriage was against their law. Philip went as government vessels sometimes sail from port, with sealed orders, which are not opened till they are far out at sea. The great change could not be made suddenly, but only after due preparation.

> "God's plans like lilies pure and white unfold;
> We must not tear the close shut leaves apart;
> Time will reveal their calyxes of gold."

Thus the reception of the Samaritans, who were half Jews (2 Kings 17: 24–29) and accepted the Mosaic books, but not the interpretations of the Elders, prepared the way for the wider opening of the door to the Gentiles.

SIMONY. TRYING TO BUY SPIRITUAL GIFTS WITH MONEY. Simon Magus offered to buy this power of the two apostles, just as magicians bought secrets of one another, an act which gave his name, *simony*, to the crime, not new in the world, but new in the church, of obtaining spiritual things, as "orders, benefices, or any position which entitles to the administration of spiritual gifts by money." This, like Ithuriel's spear in paradise, showed that he was no real Christian, and the apostles indignantly condemned him. He had "no part nor lot in this matter," but was still "in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity." His real heart was also manifested by his request that they should pray for him, not that he might be forgiven and cleansed from his sin, but merely that he might escape its consequences.

23. In the gall of bitterness. Either the gall-root, or the gall of vipers; the poison of vipers which the ancients supposed to lie in the gall. The addition, *of bitterness*, expresses the superlative degree, the intensity of the gall. He was still in malignant aggravated depravity. Rendall renders the phrase "Thou art as gall of bitterness," you are such an evil, a poison in the church, as gall-poison is in the body. **And . . . bond of iniquity.** "Hemmed around by habits and principles of *iniquity*, as if bound fast by a fetter or *bond*, from which he cannot energetically even *will* to escape." — *Whedon.* Rendall translates, "as a bond of iniquity," binding others in iniquity as with chains.

NOTE I. How little of the best things can be bought for money! Wisdom, spiritual power, poetic feeling, sound judgment, character, love, peace, forgiveness, communion with God, heaven, are as possible to the poorest man as to the richest. They can be received as far as we open our minds and hearts, but never bought. The best things of God are free to all men, as the most beautiful forms and lines are the most common.

> "At the devil's booth are all things sold,
> Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of gold;
> For a cap and bells our lives we pay;
> Bubbles we buy with a whole soul's tasking,
> 'Tis heaven alone that is given away,
> 'Tis only God may be had for the asking."

NOTE II. The apostles reproved the richest and most powerful man in the church. The church was stronger without him than with him, so long as he was not a real Christian.

NOTE III. Even in the first church we have met with three spurious disciples, Judas, Ananias, Simon Magus; and yet only three out of many thousands. About the proportion we notice in the modern church of those who have fallen into crime. "Try to be John, no matter who is Judas," says Dr. Maltby D. Babcock.

NOTE IV. Evil done in the name of religion does not make real religion any the less desirable. When Madame Roland stood upon the guillotine in what is now the Place de la Concorde in Paris, she looked at the statue of Liberty, which stood where now is the Egyptian Obelisk, and exclaimed, "Oh, Liberty, how many crimes have been committed in thy name!" Then the axe fell, and another crime was committed in the name of Liberty. But Liberty is just as sweet and precious, to be longed for and fought for, as if no crimes had been committed in her name.

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LESSON XI. — March 16.

THE ETHIOPIAN CONVERTED. — Acts 8; 29–39.

Study Verses 26–40. Read Isa. 53.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*** — ROM. 10: 10.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

It may help our scholars to understand the progress of the church if we draw a line representing its early history, and mark off

The church at Jerusalem.	The connecting history.	The gospel among the Gentiles.
Chaps. 1–7.	Chaps. 8–12.	Chaps. 13–28.

on it the three great divisions, and the chapters which belong to each. The first seven chapters concern chiefly the church at Jerusalem. From the thirteenth chapter the history concerns chiefly the gospel among the Gentile nations. Chaps. 8 to 12 record the process of transition. NOTE the chief events of this period.

To-day's lesson concerns one of these events, and shows how the gospel extended even to Africa. It is another instance of the spreading the gospel through the persecution that was intended to stamp it out. We see in this lesson THE PROGRESS OF A SOUL FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT; from heathenism to Christianity; from hopelessness to hope and joy, unspeakable and full of glory.

NOTE the contrast between the false convert and the true.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. A summer in A. D. 35–37, soon after the last lesson.

Place. Judea, in the uncultivated region southwest of Jerusalem, toward Gaza, which is near the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, or at old Gaza itself.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

These can be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

Providence in daily life.
The sincere seeker, and religious meetings.
The sincere seeker, and the Bible.
The need of helps, and their true value.
How the one described in Isa. 53 could be the glorious Messiah.
Confession of Christ.
Why by baptism.

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 36, 37; Luke 24: 27, 32.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: The Way a Sincere Inquirer found Christ.

I. AN EXAMPLE OF PROVIDENTIAL GUIDANCE (vs. 26, 27).

How the two travelers met.
Who the inquirer was.

II. SEEKING THE LIGHT THROUGH RELIGIOUS MEETINGS (v. 27).

III. SEEKING THE LIGHT THROUGH THE SCRIPTURES (v. 28).

How to be interested in the Bible.

IV. THE SEEKER FINDS AN INTERPRETER (vs. 29–31).

The need of helps in understanding fully the Scriptures.

V. NEW LIGHT ON OLD SCRIPTURES (vs. 32–35).

The Old Testament Messiah was Jesus.

VI. THE ETHIOPIAN CONFESSES CHRIST IN BAPTISM (vs. 36–39).

VII. THE PARTING OF THE WAYS. EACH ONE TO HIS WORK (vs. 39, 40).

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

For Gaza "which is desert," see George Adam Smith's *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, pp. 182–189 (very interesting). Thomson's *Land and the Book*, II., 310, "Philip and the Eunuch," and I., 19, "Eastern Chariots"; Geikie's *Holy Land and the Bible*, II., 135, "The Place where the Ethiopian was baptized." For providential guidance, see the story "Hands off," in Dr. E. E. Hale's *Christmas in a Palace*. Hackett's *Illustrations of Scriptures*, p. 224, on "Reading Aloud"; "Evangelist coming to Christian," in *Pilgrim's Progress;* Foster's *Cyclopedia of Poetical Illustrations*, 3886.

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26. And the angel of the Lord spake unto Phĭl'ĭp, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Je-ru'sa-lĕm unto Gā'za: which is desert.

I. An Example of Providential Guidance.— Vs. 26, 27. Deacon Philip had done a good work in Samaria, and its success was so great that the Christians there could wisely be left to grow by themselves. Sometimes too much help is worse than none. An authority on education has just been objecting to parents helping their children too much in their school lessons, so that they are not compelled to gain strength and development by overcoming their difficulties themselves. **26. And the** (better, "an") **angel of the Lord.** Whether he appeared in some visible form, or by some inward communication, or by vision, is not revealed, and is a matter of small consequence. But in any case it was a real messenger bringing a real message from God. **Spake unto Philip.** The deacon, or evangelist, not the apostle. **And go toward the south.** "With his face to the south," from Samaria. This would lead him directly across the different roads from Jerusalem to Gaza and to Africa. Nestle and Wendt, with the margin of revision, read "at noon," the word for "south" and "noon" naturally being the same, the difference being in the preposition used. **That goeth down from Jerusalem.** Both because Jerusalem was on high land, and any road toward the coast must be a descending one, and also toward Jerusalem is always up, as in England it is always *up* to London and *down* from London, without any regard to relative position. **Unto Gaza.** A Philistine city. The scene of one of Samson's feats, and one of the oldest cities in the world. At present it contains about sixteen thousand inhabitants. **Which is desert.** That is, wild pasture lands, uncultivated, and thinly inhabited. Opinion is still divided as to whether the adjective "desert" belongs to the way or the city. If it refers to the way, it designates the southern route through Hebron. For, as Canon Tristram says, "The other two routes — one by the sea-coast, the other across the central and richest part of Philistia — passed through a thickly peopled country. The southern road, which is the only one adapted for chariots, passed by the great arterial highway of Solomon, and afterwards of the Romans, through Hebron; and then turned to the southwest, entering, in a few hours after leaving Hebron, upon a wide pastoral plain, which extends, without interruption, to Gaza." This lonely region would be a natural one for the Ethiopian's reading aloud. "The angel said, 'Go to Gaza by the desert road.'" — *Canon Cook*. On the other hand, Prof. George Adam Smith thinks it was Gaza which was desert, that is the old city of Gaza three miles from the sea, which had been devastated with fire and sword B. C. 96. A new city of Gaza had been built by the seashore. The road from Jerusalem to Africa passed through the old city which Josephus calls desert (*Antiq.* XIV., 5, 3) and so does Strabo.



From a Photograph by Bonfils.
Tower of the Mosque of Gaza.

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27. And he arose and went: and, behold, [1] a man of E-thĭ-ō′pĭ-a, [an] eunuch of great authority under Căn′da-cē queen of the E-thĭ-ō′pĭ-ans, who [had the charge of] was over all her treasure, [and who] [2] had come to Je-ru′sa-lĕm for to worship;

[1] Zeph. 3: 10. [2] John 12: 20.

27. And he arose and went. Apparently under sealed orders, as so often in life, not knowing the object of his journey.

"I know not where I am going, but well do I know my Guide."

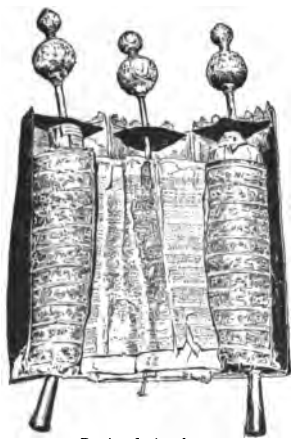
Where the two roads from Samaria and Jerusalem unite, or while he was walking along the road common to the two journeys, he met, by the ordering of Providence, **a man of Ethiopia.** *Ethiopia* was a vague term for the lands south of Egypt, "but in this case we are able to identify it with the ancient Ethiopic kingdom of Meroë by the name of its queen, Candace." "The kingdom of Meroë lay on the right bank of the Nile from its junction with the Atbara, as far as Khartoum, and thence to the east of the blue Nile to the Abyssinian Mountains." — *Tristram.* See Hastings' *Bible Dictionary.* **An eunuch.** A chamberlain or a servant of the bedchamber. The word "denoted the condition of a man who was chosen to watch over the women's apartment in great houses." — *President Woolsey.* Such persons, deprived of family ambition, were supposed "to be capable of peculiar devotion to the interests of their masters." "They were often very influential and superintended the education of young princes. The word is often used in a wide sense for such officials." — *Hastings' Bible Dictionary.* **Of great authority.** δυνάστης, from δύναμαι, *to be able, to have power;* hence, *a potentate, a man of power, a prince.* **Under Candace.** Not the name of an individual, but of a dynasty, as Pharaoh in Egypt and Cæsar in Rome. **Queen of the Ethiopians.** The kingdom of Meroë was governed by queens in the time of Augustus, and, according to Eusebius, even to his time, three hundred years after Christ. **Charge of all her treasure.** (The Greek word for treasure is *gaza.*) He was at the head of the financial department of the kingdom, chancellor of the exchequer, secretary of the treasury. It is regarded as improbable that he was a Jew or a full Jewish proselyte, for Eunuchs were not permitted to join the congregation (Deut. 23: 1), but he may have been a "proselyte of the gate," or one who in general adopted the worship of the Jews without becoming a Jew.

NOTE 1. How God's providence guides us and compels all things to work together for our good, and for the progress of his cause.

LIBRARY. Dr. Bushnell's *Sermons for the New Life*, "Every Man's Life a Plan of God." F. W. Robertson's *Life and Letters*, p. 13, giving the story of providence in his early life. Every life has such providences.

ILLUSTRATION. The "Charge of the Light Brigade."

"Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die."



Book of the Law.
The Pentateuch.

Only when God bids us go, we know that nobody "has blundered," but the orders are right and wise.

NOTE 2. Even in the deserts, the loneliest places, we can find something to do for God.

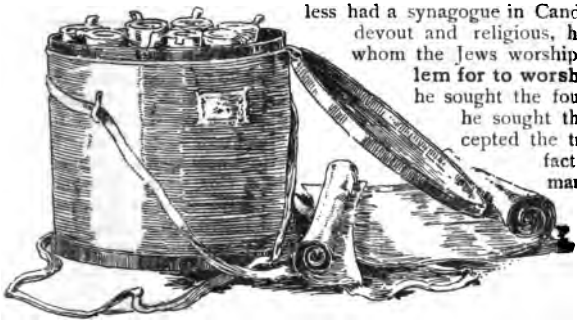
NOTE 3. All Philip's previous life, his acquaintance with the Scriptures, his thoughts, his experience, his reception of the Holy Spirit, his faithful work, were preparations for the work God now wanted him to do in sending the gospel to Africa.

NOTE 4. Note the progress of the gospel in breaking down barriers; first in the case of the Samaritans, and now of this African eunuch.

II. **Seeking the Light through Religious Meetings and the Scriptures.** — Vs. 27, 28. FIRST: THROUGH GREAT MEETINGS OF RELIGIOUS PEOPLE. Jews were scattered over nearly all the world, and doubt-

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28. Was and he was returning, and sitting in his chariot, read E-sa'ias the prophet. and was reading the prophet I-sa'iah.
29. Then And the Spirit said unto Phĭl'ĭp, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.



Parchment Case and Rolls.

less had a synagogue in Candace's capital. This man, being devout and religious, had been drawn to the true God whom the Jews worshiped, **and had come to Jerusalem for to worship.** Having tasted of the stream, he sought the fountain. Having seen some rays, he sought the source of light. He had accepted the truth that was given him, which fact in itself, since he was a leading man, amid great temptations, showed a deeply sincere and earnest soul. But he wanted more light, and he traveled a long distance, at great expense, that he might obtain it.

SECOND: THROUGH THE SCRIPTURES. At Jerusalem the Ethiopian treasurer must have heard a good deal concerning the new sect of Christians. The very persecution must have called his attention to them, their character, their deeds, their teachings. But it was natural that he should go first to the Jewish leaders, and they would misrepresent the Christians to him. The persecution also would make the Christian teachings less public. Still the very air was full of discussion of the Scriptures relating to the Messiah, which would awaken in him a desire to study them for himself. Hence he had turned to the particular passage in Isaiah, and was studying the question as he was (28) **sitting in his chariot.** "It was a maxim of the Rabbis that one who was on a journey, and without a companion, should busy himself in the study of the law." — *Schaff.* He was reading aloud as was the custom. So in their schools the scholars study aloud. When riding alone on a long journey, this would be a very pleasant occupation.

READING ALOUD. The great Jewish teachers insisted, in many instances, upon their scholars reading *aloud.* They would say, in effect, "If you wish this word to abide in you, you must speak it aloud." It is more easy for some minds to learn by the *ear* than by the eye; their minds require both the eye and the ear to cooperate in the act of memory. I speak to the experience, probably, of many, when I say that utterance aloud is often a very powerful aid to mental retentiveness. — *Joseph Parker.* Oliver Wendell Holmes is reported to have said that he spoke his thoughts aloud to others to aid his thinking, to crystallize his thoughts. Hence, one great value of teaching. Thank God if he has made you a teacher, so that you must speak aloud the truths you know.

The citation which follows shows that he was reading from the Greek translation made in Egypt, and not from the Hebrew. Such a roll would be made by hand on parchment and was very expensive, "a pearl of great price." He had probably bought it in Jerusalem in order to study the questions discussed there concerning the Messiah.

NOTE 1. Those who wish to know the truth take great pains and spare no expense to obtain it.

NOTE 2. Young people often say that it is hard to become interested in reading the Scriptures. But if any one reads them in order to find out what to do, and what to believe, he will, of necessity, find a deep interest in the study, as one finds a map interesting when he is planning a journey, or a chart when he is crossing the ocean.



A Papyrus Roll Open and Written in Columns.

III. **The Ethiopian finds an Interpreter.** — Vs. 29–31. As Bunyan's Pilgrim found Evangelist when he was seeking to find the gate to the heavenly city. **29. Then the Spirit said,** by some inward impulse, influencing not merely his feelings, but his judgment; producing not merely an impression, but wisdom.

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30. And Phĭl'ĭp ran thither to *him*, and heard him read the prophet E-sa'ias, reading I-sa'iah the prophet, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

31. And he said, How can I, except some man should one shall guide me? And he desired besought Phĭl'ĭp that he would to come up and sit with him.

30. And Philip ran thither, not only showing the eagerness of his obedience, but from necessity, if he would join the company of travelers. And while running beside the chariot he overheard **him read the prophet Esaias.** Greek for "Isaiah." **Understandest thou what thou readest?** In the Greek there is a play upon the word for understand (*Ginôskeis*, "to know") and read (*Anaginôskeis*, "to know again," that is, to read, because the letter characters being permanent enable one to know again and again what they say). St. Paul uses the same play upon these words in 2 Cor. 3: 2. *Ginôskomenē*, "known," and *anaginôskomenē*, "read" of all men. There is a well-known parallel saying of the Emperior Julian with reference to the Christian writings. *Anegnôn; egnôn; kategnôn*, "I read; I understood; I condemned;" and the famous retort of the bishop,

Anegnôs, all' ouk *egnôs*; ei gar *egnôs*, ouk an *kategnôs*.
You *read*, but you did not *understand*; for if you *understood*, you would not *condemn*.

31. How can I, except some man should guide me? The passage in Isaiah was a very difficult one for a Jew to understand. It seemed almost impossible to put together the idea of Christ as a sufferer, as despised and slain, and the promise that he should be a glorious king, triumphing over the world. Only the facts could solve the problem; and these facts were familiar to Philip. **And he desired** (besought) **Philip.** This is stronger than merely asking him to do so. — *Woolsey.*

THE NEED OF HELPS FOR UNDERSTANDING THE FULL MEANING OF THE SCRIPTURES. There is enough of Scripture that is perfectly plain for every one to be guided safely through life to heaven; like the light and air and water in their familiar uses. We can see plainly enough with our eyes for our ordinary daily life.

But there are many things one can see with a microscope and telescope, which he could never learn without those aids. There are depths and beauties and powers, and blessings, which only an interpreter can reveal. Scientific men are the interpreters of nature. So are artists. So are thinkers. We cannot have too many of them. We can often see a thing very clearly after it is pointed out to us, which yet entirely escaped our notice before. A picture explained by an artist has been a new picture ever since, though we had seen it many times. A fact of nature pointed out by a scientist has illumined some portion of God's works which were unknown before. The same is true of the Scriptures. Researches in every department of knowledge are throwing light on the Bible. Different persons see the truth from different standpoints and from varied experiences. Each one can help to interpret the Bible to others. He is not wise who walks among treasures of knowledge, and over untold riches in the earth beneath his feet, and will learn only what he can find out for himself without an interpreter.

ILLUSTRATIONS. Mr. Ruskin says that one of the most difficult of arts is to see. One of his volumes has taught me to see things in nature that my eyes never understood before. A guide in foreign travel has shown me things, in a brief time, that it would have taken days or weeks to have learned by myself. More than one book has been to me a new revelation. Read Ruskin's interpretation of Milton's *Comus*, in his *Sesame and Lilies*, for a fine example. The reason for teachers, preachers, and books, is to interpret to others. They are like those who open the secret doors in an old castle, unnoticed till pointed out, but opening into treasures of gold and jewels and art.

"We lack but open eye and ear — The still, small voice in autumn's hush,
To find the Orient marvels here; — You maple wood the burning bush."

COMPARE the opening of the eyes of Elisha's servant at Dothan (2 Kings 6: 8–17). Hagar's eyes opened to see the well (Gen. 21: 19).

LIBRARY. In Washington Irving's *Alhambra* is a story of "the Moor's Legacy." A vast treasure was hidden within the mountain, but it required three things to obtain it, — Diligent Search, certain Written Words, and the Living Voice. These three best reveal to us the treasures of the Scriptures.

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32. The place of the scripture which he read was this, [1] He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth:

33. In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

34. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?

35. Then Philip opened his mouth, [2] and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

36. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; [3] what doth hinder me to be baptized?

37. And *a* Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, [5] I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

[1] Isa. 53: 7, 8.
[2] Luke 24: 27; Acts 18: 28.
[3] Acts 10: 47.
[4] Matt. 28: 19; Mark 16: 16.
[5] Matt. 16: 16; John 6: 69; Acts 9: 20; 1 John 4: 15.
a Many ancient authorities omit, wholly or in part, v. 37.

IV. **New Light on Old Scriptures.** — Vs. 32–35. **32. The place of the scripture.** The section which he was reading contained the following passage, which was its central theme. The passage is quoted from the Septuagint, or Greek version, of Isaiah 53: 7, 8. **He was led as a sheep to the slaughter.** He unresistingly went to his sacrificial death on the cross, as the lamb for the evening sacrifice to the altar. The chapter from which these verses are taken contains no less than eleven distinct references to the vicarious character of Christ's sufferings. — *Abbott.*

33. In his humiliation his judgment was taken away. *His judgment,* — the judgment (justice) due to him. A fair trial was not accorded to him, as is plainly seen in the account of the trial of Jesus. **Who shall declare his generation?** Gloag, Hackett, De Wette, Rendall, Meyer, Alford, understand this as equivalent to, Who can describe his contemporaries? Their wickedness is so great, it is beyond words to express. Schaff renders it as follows: "But though so lowly, so mean, so poor, was his semblance on earth, who shall declare his generation? It is ineffable! for he is the eternal Son of God, begotten from everlasting of the Father." "His generation cannot be declared, for (1) his *divine nature* is incomprehensible. It is eternal. (2) His *human nature*, as conceived by the Holy Ghost, is beyond the reach of man to declare. (3) His spiritual generation, the multitude of the faithful, in number as the sands of the seashore, are known only to God." — *W. Denton.*

LIBRARY. See Briggs' *Messianic Prophecy*, p. 358, and Delitzsch and George Adam Smith on Isaiah.

His life is taken. The Greek word expresses that it was done by violence.

34. Of whom speaketh the prophet this? The earlier Jewish authorities all understood chapter 53 of Isaiah to refer to the coming Messiah. — *Abbott.* Later, some applied it to the nation, and some to the prophet himself. **Of himself.** The Ethiopian may have been acquainted with the tradition that Isaiah was placed between the halves of a split log and sawn asunder.

35. Then Philip . . . began at the same scripture. Which was fulfilled in Jesus, and has been fulfilled in no other. **And preached unto him Jesus.** Literally, *Announced to him the glad tidings, Jesus.* — *Abbott.* Philip showed the strange and marvelous correspondence between the many descriptions of the Messiah in the prophets and the then well-known life of Jesus of Nazareth. He placed Jesus in his life, death, and character, beside the picture of the Messiah which the prophets had painted, and all could see that the picture was a portrait of Jesus. He could also explain how this humiliation and sacrifice were the means by which the glories of the Messiah and his kingdom were to be attained, and he could illustrate it by the character of the church, its deeds and its influence as already shown in Jerusalem.

V. **The Ethiopian confesses Christ in Baptism.** — Vs. 36–39. **36. See, here is water.** Or simply, "Behold water!" This was saying, "I believe in Jesus, I accept him as my Saviour, and now I wish to confess him by baptism," as all other Christians had been doing. Without doubt Philip had told him about baptism as the Christian way of acknowledging Christ.

37. If thou believest, etc. This verse is wanting in the best manuscripts, and was

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38. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down both into the water, both Phĭl'ĭp and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

39. And when they were come came up out of the water, [1] the Spĭrit of the Lord caught away Phĭl'ĭp; that and the eunuch saw him no more: and for he went on his way rejoicing.

40. But Phĭl'ĭp was found at A-zō-tus: and passing through he preached in the gospel to all the cities, till he came to Cæs-a-rē'a.

[1] 1 Kings 18: 12; Ezek. 3: 12.

probably inserted from some marginal note made to keep readers from error. But the words are exactly true, and are found in other Scriptures, and are implied in the fact of baptism. It is precisely that believing with all the heart which is the condition of a profession of faith. As Professor Knowling says, "These words may well have expressed what actually happened, as the question in v. 36 evidently required an answer." **I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.** He believed with his mind and his heart. He believed in him as his Master and his Saviour. Such faith, leading to love and obedience, is salvation.

38. **He commanded the chariot.** He ordered the chariot-driver to stop, and of course the whole retinue would see what took place, and they may certainly be regarded as the nucleus of a congregation to be established in Ethiopia.'— *Cambridge Bible.* **He baptized him.** Without waiting further to instruct him, or delaying for a public ceremonial.

NOTE the steps in the progress of a soul from darkness to light, and compare with Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* as far as the Palace Beautiful, whence he was sent forth clothed in the Christian's armor.

1. He was deeply in earnest, and went on a long, dangerous, and costly journey to find the true religion.
2. He did this against many influences that held him back.
3. He went to the religious people and meetings where he thought he could learn about the true God and his service.
4. He read the Bible carefully to learn the way.
5. He was not discouraged because he did not find the light.
6. He accepted the help of one who knew the truth from experience.
7. As soon as he saw that Jesus was the true Saviour, he accepted him with all his heart.
8. As soon as he felt that he was a true disciple he desired to confess Christ by baptism, in the presence of his whole retinue. Confession strengthens the character and confirms the choice. Like Cortez, on landing on the Mexican shores, it burns the ships behind him. No better, no simpler, no more beautiful or expressive way of confessing Christ has ever been found, or even imagined, than that of baptism.
9. Then he went on to his home, to use all his influence and wealth for making known the gospel to his countrymen. "There is a tradition," says Professor Schaff, "that this minister of Candace, whose name was Judich, preached the gospel, on his return to Ethiopia, with great success, and that his royal mistress was among his converts."

VI. **The Parting of the Ways: Each Man to his Work.** — Vs. 39, 40. **39. The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip.** "The expression asserts that he left the eunuch suddenly, under the impulse of an urgent monition from above, but not that the mode of his departure was miraculous in any other respect." — *Hackett.* Others think it was miraculous. "Instances of a similar miraculous rapture occur in the history of Elijah (1 Kings 18: 12; 2 Kings 2: 16)." — *Schaff.* **And he** (the eunuch) **went on his way rejoicing.** In his new-found treasure, in his conscious possession of Christ and his salvation. Nothing else in the world could bring so much joy. "It was," says Bonar, "joy *from* God, joy *in* God, the joy *of* God."

40. **But Philip was found at Azotus.** The preposition is εἰς (*to, into*), implying that he was carried into the city, and was staying there. — *Knowling.* Here he preached, and then **in all the cities** along the Mediterranean coast **till he came to Cæsarea**, where he made his home. Here Paul and Luke called upon him several years later. **He had** four daughters who prophesied.

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LESSON XII. — March 23.

TEMPERANCE LESSON. — Ephesians 5: 11–21.

Read Ephesians 5. — Commit Verses 15–18.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess.*** — EPH. 5: 18.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

First. — Give the scholars some knowledge of the Epistle to the Ephesians.

Ephesus was situated on the western coast of Asia Minor, south of Smyrna, on the Ægean Sea.

Character. — It was the capital of a Roman province, rich, idolatrous, luxurious, with the immoralities of Rome. It had an amphitheater which would hold twenty-four thousand five hundred people, and a magnificent temple to Diana, one of the seven wonders of the world.

Paul visited Ephesus twice, the second time remaining there more than two years.

The Epistle to the Ephesians was written by Paul, from his prison in Rome, A. D. 61–63. "Paul reflected in this epistle the many colored, the richly variegated, wisdom of God (Eph. 3: 10). — *Farrar.* Alford calls it the most heavenly work of one whose very imagination is peopled with things in the heavens."

Second. The Method of Teaching is to lay down the great fundamental principle of the lesson that there are two moral kingdoms in the world: on the one side is gathered the evil, and on the other the good, like the sheep and the goats in the parable.

Then make the application to Temperance on the one hand and Intemperance on the other.

Finally, every one must make his choice as to which kingdom he shall live in.

LEARN BY HEART

the whole lesson; 2 Pet. 1: 5, 6.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

These can be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

The kingdom of evil, its characteristics.
The kingdom of God, its contents.
The intervening country.
The necessity of choice.
Intemperance, its evils.
"Wherein is excess."
The way of escape.
"Filled with the spirit."

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: The Two Kingdoms. To which shall we belong?

I. THE KINGDOM OF EVIL AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

What is in each of them. Each one seen as in a picture or guide-book.

II. EXPLANATIONS (vs. 11–21).

III. WHAT TO DO IN REFERENCE TO THEM.

IV. ONE EXAMPLE. INTEMPERANCE (v. 18).

FIRST. The Kingdom of Intemperance.
SECOND. The way of escape.

This lesson presents the contrasts of the two great moral kingdoms which are contending for supremacy in our hearts and in the world. We will first consider the contents and characteristics of these kingdoms as presented in the lesson, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, and in the New Testament, so that we may see clearly, vividly, and truly the choice that lies before us.

THE KINGDOM OF EVIL.

In the verses of the lesson we find the following: —

Works of darkness.	Drunkenness.
Unspeakable sins.	Excess.
Folly.	Days of evil.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

From the verses of the lesson.

Light.	Fear of God.
Watchfulness.	Filled with the spirit.
Wisdom.	Redeeming the time.
Praise.	Unselfishness.

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In the whole Epistle.

Lying.	Foolish jesting.
Stealing.	Darkened understanding.
Malice.	Deceitful lusts
Uncleanness.	Grieving the spirit.
Covetousness.	Evil-speaking.
Filthiness.	Corrupt communications.
Disobedience.	Respect of persons.
Anger.	Wickedness in high places.
Ignorance.	Alienation from God.
Greediness.	Fornication.
Lasciviousness.	Vain words.
Threatening.	Lusts of the flesh.

Dead in trespasses and sins.

A SUMMARY.

The sins forbidden in the ten commandments.
The description in Rom. 1: 18, 21–32.
The works of the flesh in Gal. 5: 19–21.
The woes in Matt. 23.

In the whole Epistle.

Grace.	Knowledge of God.
Faith.	Rooted and grounded in love.
Wisdom.	Filled with the fulness of God.
Goodness.	Long-suffering.
Peace.	Forbearing in love.
Love.	Unity of the spirit.
Meekness.	The bond of peace.
Lowliness.	Speaking the truth in love.
Prudence.	Singleness of heart.
Righteousness.	Strong in the Lord.
Obedience.	Tender-hearted.
Good will.	Good conversation.
Thanksgiving.	Honoring others.
Truth.	Perfect in Christ.
Faithfulness.	Walking in love.

A SUMMARY.

The fruits of the spirit, Gal. 5: 22–23.
The ten commandments.
The Beatitudes, Matt. 5: 1–12.
The Sermon on the Mount, Matt. 5–7.
The New Jerusalem, Rev. 21, 22.

11. And and [1] have no fellowship with [2] the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even [3] reprove them; them;

12. [4] For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. for the things which are done by them in secret it is a shame even to speak of.

13. But [5] all things that when they are [a] reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make everything that is made manifest is light.

14. Wherefore he he saith, [6] Awake, thou that sleepest, and [7] arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. shine upon thee.

15. [8] See then that Look therefore carefully how ye walk, circumspectly, not as fools, unwise, but as wise;

16. [9] Redeeming redeeming the time, [10] because the days are evil.

[1] 1 Cor. 5: 9; 2 Cor. 6: 14.
[2] Rom. 6: 21.
[3] Lev. 19: 17.
[4] V. 3; Rom. 1: 24.
[5] John 3: 20; Heb. 4: 13.
[6] Rom. 13: 11.
[7] John 5: 25; Eph. 2: 5.
[8] Col. 4: 5.
[9] Gal. 6: 10.
[10] John 12: 35; Eph. 6: 13.
a Or, *convicted.*

EXPLANATIONS.

4. **Foolish talking.** "This means more than mere *random talk;* it is that *talk of fools* which is folly and sin together." — *Alford.* **Jesting.** Profligate, unclean jokes, which bring a blush to the cheek of innocence. "*Foolish talking* is the coarse talk of fools; *jesting*, the more refined half-suggestion of vice or profanity in the conversation or writing of a witty man of the world." — *Cook.*

11. **Unfruitful works of darkness.** "Vices finish with themselves and perish; virtues put forth fruit and abound." — *Jerome.* Good fruit cannot grow in darkness. But that which should bring forth good fruit in the light, when placed in darkness brings forth corruption, poisons, insects, death. **Reprove them** by word and by example.

13. **All things that are reproved,** etc. Public reproof brings to light the sins of darkness, and this tends to destroy the evil. Evil loves secrecy. To look it in the face tends to make us hate it. To expose it to others shames sinners. Sin is too horrible when seen in its own nature. Compare Milton's picture of sin.

14. **Awake thou that sleepest.** Unconscious of the realities around you, like Jonah asleep in the storm, dreaming of happiness and heaven, while dead in trespasses and sins.

15. **Walk circumspectly.** With accuracy, strictness, looking on every side to see that the right path is taken. **Not as fools.** Who go carelessly through life, running into temptations and dangers, visiting saloons and places of evil, going with bad companions, not intending to go far astray, but just to sail into the edge of the maelstrom of sin, to see how it looks. Such are fools. **But as wise.** Keeping in the right way; avoiding temptations; looking carefully for the ways that lead to the right ends.

16. **Redeeming the time.** Redeem means to buy up, to get possession of; time here

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17. [1] Wherefore be ye not unwise, foolish, but [2] understanding understand [3] what the will of the Lord is.

18. And [4] be not drunk drunken with wine, wherein is excess; riot, but be filled with the Spirit;

19. Speaking speaking one to yourselves another [5] in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in with your heart to the Lord;

20. [6] Giving giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father [7] in the name of our Lord Jē'sus Chrīst [1] to God, even the Father;

21. [8] Submitting subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Christ.

[1] Col. 4: 5. [4] Luke 21: 34. [7] Heb. 13: 15.
[2] Rom. 12: 2. [5] 1 Cor. 14: 26. [8] Phil. 2: 3.
[3] 1 Thes. 4: 3. [6] Col. 3: 17.

means opportunity, the right or fitting time. The words therefore mean, improve every opportunity; use your time to the best advantage; make every opportunity yield its utmost of good. **Because the days are evil.** Because there are many temptations and dangers, hidden currents, secret pitfalls, enemies on every side. These "evil days" are largely connected with intemperance and its accompaniments.

17. **Understanding . . . the will of the Lord.** By studying God's Word, and his works of nature, and his book of Providence. Learn what the Bible says of intemperance. See the effects of its evil, and the value of temperance in the experience of those around you.

18. See below.

19. **Speaking . . . in psalms and hymns . . . singing.** Conquer evil by the religious life, inwardly felt and outwardly expressed, in private and socially.

20. **Giving thanks.** This is right in response to favors. It helps one to continue on the side of God. What a man is really thankful for is a test of his character, and a maker of character.

21. **Submitting yourselves one to another.** Not seeking to rule, but to help each other. We must lose our own life in the larger life of the church, the society, the organization. Still it must be in the **fear of God**, only in those things which are right.

NOTES. 1. In practical life we see men in the space between these kingdoms, apparently, not wholly, belonging to the one or the other. The evil and the good are not fully developed. The two are intermingled and united in the same person, the gold sometimes tarnished, and flecked with dross, the dross gilded, and flecked with gold. Thus we do not always realize how distinct the kingdoms are.

2. But every person belongs to one kingdom or the other. Two seeds may look alike, and one grow into a poison tree, and the other into a fruit tree. The result lies in the seed at the first. The stream runs in one direction or the other, however many eddies may flow in different ways. When we are in the twilight, it is the twilight of the rising or of the setting sun, however difficult it may be for the moment to decide whether the darkness is waning or deepening, and whether the light is fading or increasing.

3. The decisive question is which way are we going: toward the evil or toward the good, toward the rising or the setting sun?

LIBRARY. Benjamin Franklin, on the rising or setting sun, in John Fiske's *Account of the Federal Convention*, which adopted the Constitution of the United States.

4. The real contrast is between SELFISHNESS and LOVE. Whichever is supreme in his heart and life decides the question as to which kingdom any one belongs.

5. Each one must decide for himself to which kingdom he will belong. Whichever one he chooses to enter, of that one he must in the end gain the characteristics, live the life, reap the harvest, suffer or enjoy the reward. This is the great question of life. President G. Stanley Hall said but the other day that science itself insisted on the necessity of conversion, of a decision as to what kind of life one will lead.

ILLUSTRATION. Pizzaro, in his earlier attempts to conquer Peru, came to a time when all his followers were about to desert him. "Drawing his sword, he traced a line with it from east to west. Then, turning towards the south, 'Friends and comrades,' he said, 'on that side are toil, hunger, nakedness, the drenching storm, desertion and death; on this side, ease and pleasure. There lies Peru with all its riches, here, Panama and its poverty. Choose, each man, as becomes a brave Castilian. For my part, I go to the south.' So

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saying, he stepped across the line. One after another, his followers followed him. This was the crisis of Pizarro's fate. There are moments in the lives of men which, as they are seized or neglected, decide their future destiny." — *Prescott's Conquest of Peru, I., 263–265.*

ONE APPLICATION. TO TEMPERANCE.

18. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit. FIRST: THE KINGDOM OF INTEMPERANCE. *Drunk with wine*, then the usual intoxicating liquor. *Wherein is excess.* ασωτία, from ἀ, *not*, and σώζω, *to save;* hence, that which is opposed to salvation: wastefulness, dissoluteness, profligacy; that which wastes body and soul. The adverb is used in Luke 15: 13, where the prodigal is described as wasting his substance in riotous living. The nature of all intoxicating drinks is to lead to excess; the appetite for wine increases; it excites all passions, all the bad feelings, and leads to actions which would not otherwise be performed. Riot, dissoluteness, anger, hate, intemperance, vice, murder, all lie in the bottom of the wine cup.

ILLUSTRATION. "A story is current in the Orient of a wise old sheik, who gave to a young Arab prince, from whom he was about to part, a list of crimes, and bade him choose the one which seemed least harmful. The young prince turned in horror from murder, theft, and loss of virtue, and told the patriarch he would choose intemperance. 'You have chosen that,' said the wise old man, 'which will bring you all.'"

ILLUSTRATIONS. The tract, *Deacon Giles' Distillery*. The story of "Circe's Palace" in Hawthorne's *Tanglewood Tales*. The veiled prophet of Khorassan in Moore's *Lalla Rookh*. Various illustrations in *Temperance Bible Studies* by F. N. Peloubet, published by Nat. Temp. Soc.

ILLUSTRATIONS. This is the way Mr. Amos R. Wells, in his *Three Years with the Children*, teaches temperance, under the caption "Tripped Up": —

Jack Collins, with his *six* friends, stepped into the rum shop one evening. As they went out, late that night, walking very unsteadily, the saloon keeper put a big stone right in the way of one of Jack's comrades, and tripped him up. The comrade fell and was killed. That comrade was Jack's HEALTH.

The next night Jack Collins, with *five* friends, went to the rum shop again, and again they all got drunk — so drunk that another friend was tripped up, as he went out, by the sly saloon keeper. That friend was Jack's REPUTATION.

The third night, in just the same way, another friend was lost, this time Jack's WEALTH. The fourth night the stumbling-block tripped up Jack's HAPPINESS, and the poor fellow from that time on had nobody to keep him cheerful. The next friend to go was Jack's MIND, so that Jack hardly had wit enough left to call for a glass of whisky when he came back on the sixth night. And that evening, as he and his sole remaining friend left the rum shop, that friend also was tripped up and slain. It was Jack's SOUL.

The next night was the seventh, the holy Sabbath, and Jack lay alone in the gutter, his six friends all fallen over the rum shop's stumbling-blocks. And Jack himself was dead.

ALCOHOL AND HEALTH. "Few questions at the present day are capable of arousing more bitterness of dispute than that concerning the effect of alcohol upon the human system. Some assert that its daily use in moderation is, if not essential, at least beneficial to health, while others hold that the word "moderation" is inapplicable to the use of wine even in the most minute quantities.

"Science, which is impartial and seeks facts alone, without regard to their possible application, does not hold to either of these views in its entirety, but inclines rather to the side of the total abstainers. It does not regard alcohol as a food in the sense that it can be taken regularly as a substitute for the albumens, the fats and the starches of ordinary food, but it does say that it may act as such, in the absence of other food, for a short time, and that its use may in an emergency be life-saving.

"This is practically placing alcohol with the drugs — substances which may be useful in sickness, but are injurious in health; and that is really where it belongs.

"It is a common belief that a drink of whisky or brandy is warming, but the reverse is the fact. Alcohol dilates the blood-vessels of the surface, and so makes the skin feel warm, but at the same time radiation of heat from the surface is increased and the temperature of the body is lowered. The action of alcohol is also to lower the vital processes by causing a slow oxidation of the waste products.

"The very fact of its interference with the oxidation of the tissues of the body causes a depression of the vital forces, and so of the resisting power of the organism to invasion by disease germs. And here practice supports theory, for it is a fact of common observation

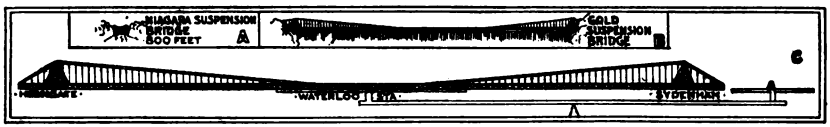
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that under equal conditions of exposure the habitual drinker almost always succumbs sooner than the abstainer." — *Youth's Companion, 1901.*

HIS CIGARETTE — A LESSON IN ARITHMETIC. 1. Adds to his nervous troubles.
2. Subtracts from his physical energy.
3. Multiplies his aches and pains.
4. Divides his mental powers.
5. Takes interest from his work.
6. Discounts his chances for success. — *Kentucky S. S. Reporter.*

THE WASTE OF WEALTH. In the *Strand Magazine* is a series of illustrations, the object of which is to show in a most vivid and surprising way the waste of wealth in the United Kingdom during a period of sixty-three years from last June, from intoxicating drinks. The same, practically, would be true of the United States.

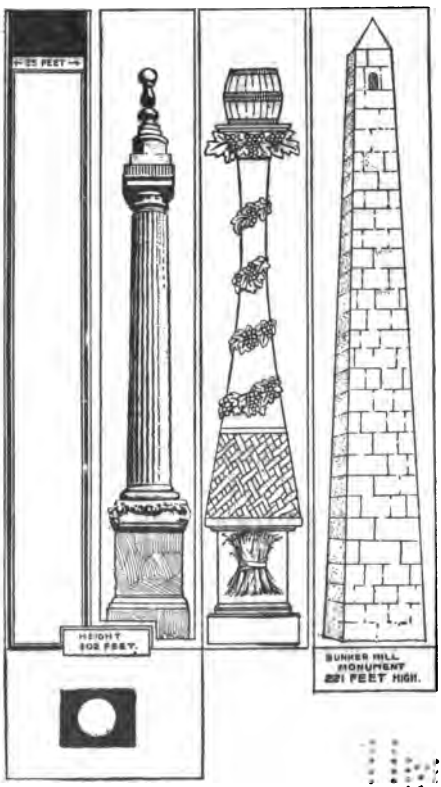
If the national drink bill had remained unpaid during that time, and assuming that no interest was charged on the unpaid millions, the drinkers of the United Kingdom would to-day find themselves face to face with a liability of £6,914,000,000 or $33,200,000,000. "This would absorb one tenth of the whole world's wealth. In fact, it would practically be necessary to mortgage the United Kingdom itself to pay the bill." All the gold current in the whole world would pay only one ninth of the bill. All the gold and silver together



would pay only one third. It would take the output of all the gold and silver mines in the world ninety-five years, at the average of the last ten years, to pay the rest of the bill.

The latest suspension bridge over Niagara (A), 800 feet long, is entirely built of steel, of which 3,668½ cubic feet were used. If a bridge was erected on similar lines out of the precious metal provided by our "drink gold," before the last ounce was used the bridge (B) would be spanning an abyss 22,072 feet wide. The Niagara bridge weighed a ton for each foot of its span; therefore, to balance our 54,358 tons of gold, a steel bridge (C) on the same plan would have to be constructed, having a length of almost eleven miles; that is to say, if one end rested on the heights of Highgate, one could promenade right across London and not leave the bridge until one arrived at the gates of the Crystal Palace. The lengths of the three bridges in the diagram are all drawn to the same scale.

To the left we have our "drink gold" in the shape of a plain rectangular column, having a base 25 by 20 feet; the column is drawn to exactly the same scale as the London Monument that appears to its right. To the right of the diagram is an alternative design for a golden monument to Bacchus made out of the gold that would pay the drink bill. The black rectangular figure at the



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foot of the diagram shows the cross-section of the drink column, while the white circle superimposed is a section of the shaft of the monument; it looks small, but, if placed on the ground, two men and a boy standing on each other's shoulders would only just equal in height its diameter. On the right is Bunker Hill Monument, 221 feet high.

The Matterhorn (14,836 feet high) looks very imposing, even when seen from a great height, but when it is compared (at the right of the diagram) with one hundred and ninety-five columns of sovereigns, forming a screen of gold fourteen feet wide and thirty-five miles high (our "drink gold"), its appearance is somewhat mole-hill-cular.

N. B. — Heights are alone drawn to scale in this diagram.

SECOND: THE WAY OF ESCAPE, — BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT. The Holy Spirit of God, and thus with all the pure and holy feelings, acts, tastes, and love that belong to the kingdom of God.

1. If one is filled with the Spirit, there will not be room for the spirit of evil.

2. He will have no taste for the things that find their inspiration in intemperance. He will be opposed to them as contrary to his nature.

LIBRARY. Chalmers' *Sermons*, "The Expulsive Power of a New Affection."

Religious life, expressed in religious worship, is one of the greatest of all aids to a temperate life. Let this fill the life before intemperance has a chance to assail it. Social religious life guards against the social temptations of strong drink. So thankfulness to God for the good will strengthen us against the ingratitude of doing what he hates and forbids.

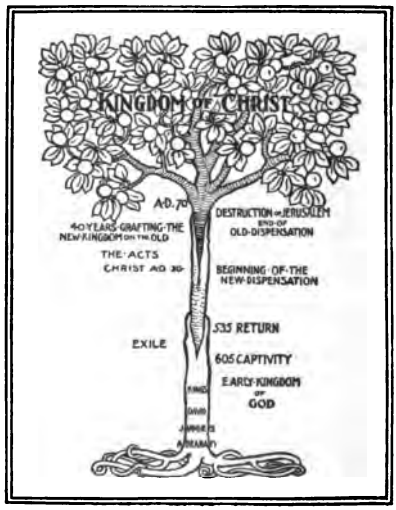
The five principles noted above, as applying to the kingdom of evil and the kingdom of God, all apply here.

LEARN BY HEART. Each scholar should learn by heart some texts of Scripture on the subject of temperance.

SIGNING THE PLEDGE. Each one should sign the temperance pledge.

SOMETIMES people object to having boys sign a temperance pledge or promise not to use intoxicating beverages. Mr. John B. Gough, the popular temperance lecturer, who had been intemperate, but afterward reformed, said: —

"If the pledge had been offered me when I was a boy in Sabbath school I should have been spared those seven dreadful years."



LESSON XIII. — March 30.
REVIEW AND EASTER.

SCRIPTURE LESSON.
John 20: 1–18.

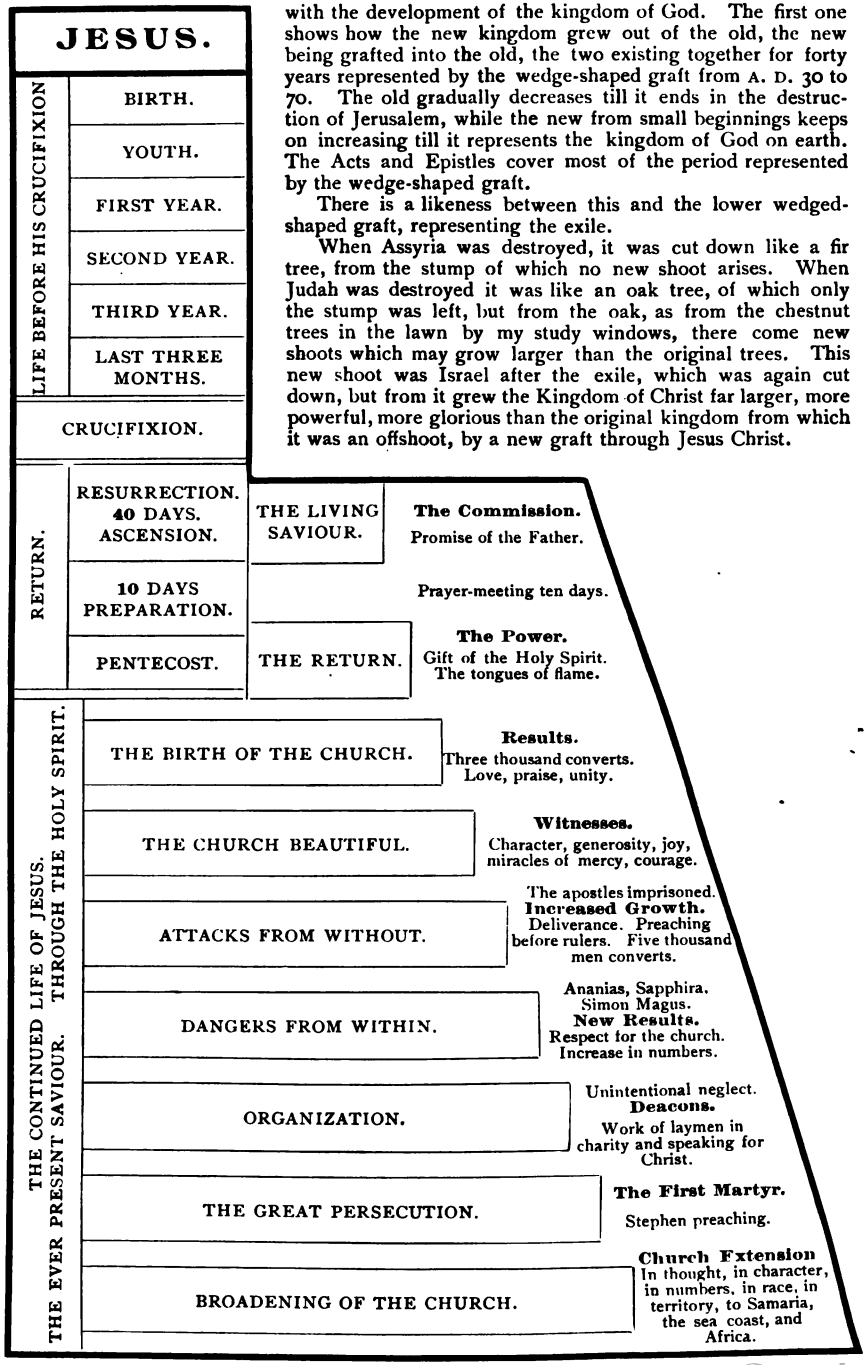
GOLDEN TEXTS.

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. — ACTS 2: 36.

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life. — JOHN 11: 25.

Two diagrams will help us to understand the period we are studying in its connection

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with the development of the kingdom of God. The first one shows how the new kingdom grew out of the old, the new being grafted into the old, the two existing together for forty years represented by the wedge-shaped graft from A. D. 30 to 70. The old gradually decreases till it ends in the destruction of Jerusalem, while the new from small beginnings keeps on increasing till it represents the kingdom of God on earth. The Acts and Epistles cover most of the period represented by the wedge-shaped graft.

There is a likeness between this and the lower wedged-shaped graft, representing the exile.

When Assyria was destroyed, it was cut down like a fir tree, from the stump of which no new shoot arises. When Judah was destroyed it was like an oak tree, of which only the stump was left, but from the oak, as from the chestnut trees in the lawn by my study windows, there come new shoots which may grow larger than the original trees. This new shoot was Israel after the exile, which was again cut down, but from it grew the Kingdom of Christ far larger, more powerful, more glorious than the original kingdom from which it was an offshoot, by a new graft through Jesus Christ.

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So, too, the nation of the Jews will be restored in Jesus Christ.

By this diagram we can study the progress of the church during its first five or six years. It is a marvelous development, in the apostles themselves, in the Jewish Christians, in numbers, and in character. Have the scholars LEARN BY HEART the steps in the development of the gospel of the kingdom.

DRILL them on the facts recorded in these chapters, in their relation to the progress of the gospel.

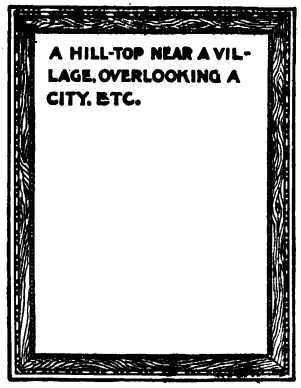
EASTER LESSONS.

Every event in the story of this quarter shows that Jesus has risen from the dead, that he is alive now, and what he is doing. What Jesus is doing to-day shows that he is alive now in heaven and working for us on earth. These lessons show the kind of things we should do if we are raised with Jesus into newness of life, the resurrection life.

This story is a most beautiful Easter lesson.

REVIEW BY WORD PICTURES.

This is especially good for the younger classes. Or in the older ones different scholars may give the word pictures. There can be an actual frame, or one drawn on a blackboard.



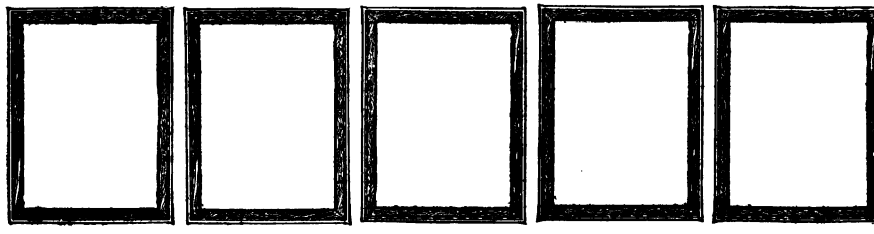
1. A hill-top, near a village, overlooking a city. Twelve men are gathered together. One spreads out his hand and suddenly rises up into the sky and soars out of sight. The eleven gazing. Two angels appear and speak to them.

2. I am in an enclosure, surrounded by beautiful buildings. Crowds of people are thronging the place. I see two men going through a beautiful gateway. Now they stop. Some one is asking them a question. They answer it. The man gets up, leaps, and runs, and shouts. Who were the three men, and what was done?

3. I see a dark, bare, but small underground room. I notice two men in it. It is night. A strange being suddenly appears. He is silently opening the doors, and the two men go out into the street. I look again. It is daylight. I see the same two men in a kind of colonnade with rows of pillars. Listen, they are talking very earnestly. Pretty soon some police officers come and stop them, and lead them away. I look again, and see the same two men in a large room, with richly dressed men sitting in a circle around it. One of them makes a speech. The two men are beaten and sent away. Can you name the men, the places, and what was done in each place?

4. A company of leading men sitting round a hall. A court sits. Witnesses. The prisoner, with a face shining like an angel's. An earnest speech. A mob. A vision. Stones thrown. A young man guarding some garments. A dying prayer.

5. I see a man walking along a lonely path toward the south. And there toward the east is coming a chariot drawn by two horses, accompanied by a retinue of persons. In the chariot is a dark-faced, handsomely dressed man, reading a book. Now the two men meet, and the man who was walking gets up into the chariot. By and by they come to a pool of water, and both of the men come down from the chariot, and the poor man baptizes the prince. They part and one goes — where? and the other goes — where?



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FROM APRIL 6 TO JUNE 29.

LESSON I. — April 6.

SAUL OF TARSUS CONVERTED. — Acts 9 : 1–12.

Study Verses 1–20.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.*** — Acts 3: 19.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Every event may be viewed from different standpoints, as a flower may be considered from the point of view of botany, or art, or medicine, or perfumery; as a thing of beauty, or as a part of the landscape.

So we should consider Saul's conversion, first in reference to its effect on the church. Saul when transformed into Paul became the most influential man in all its history. Through him the church became the church for all nations and all ages, as Christ had intended it to be.

After his conversion we see almost nothing of him for three years. He is like a foundation-stone of a lighthouse, laid deep under water; like a slender shoot, scarcely noticed among the forest trees around it, although it is to grow greater and more fruitful than all the others.

This view will require but little time.

Next we are to look upon Saul as an individual, and study his experience of conversion: its methods, its progress, and its essential features. A brief comparison with the way others became disciples will prevent any from thinking the manner of conversion must always be the same, and enable them to get at the true underlying principles.

PLACE IN THE HISTORY,

closely following the conversion of Stephen. The introduction.

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 5, 6; John 3: 16; Isa. 55: 7; 2 Cor. 5: 17.

THE SECTION

includes vs. 1–22, compared with the two other accounts of Paul's conversion (Acts 22: 6–16 and 26: 12–18), together with other Bible references to his early life.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. Probably in A. D. 35 to 37. The common date has been A. D. 37. Lewin places it at midsummer.

The later authorities are inclining to an earlier date: McGiffert to 31; Ramsay, 33; Thatcher, 34 or 35.

Place. Near Damascus, the capital of Syria, one hundred and forty miles north of Jerusalem. Damascus was called "the paradise of God"; the Abana and Pharpar, to which Naaman referred as "better than all the waters of Israel," made the region "blossom as the rose."

It is probably the oldest city in the world. In Paul's time there were many Jews and several synagogues. At the present time there are "not less than one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants." A

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CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

These can be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

The early life of Paul.
His character.
Why he persecuted.
The great conflict.
Kicking against the pricks.
The change wrought in Saul.
Different ways of conversion.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

There are many books upon the life of Paul. Some of the latest, besides those on the apostolic age, named on pp. 8–10, are Lyman Abbott's *Life and Letters of Paul* ($1.50, Houghton); Selden's *In the Time of Paul* (75 cts., Revell); Dr. Speer's *The Man Paul* (75 cts., Revell); Orello Cone's *Paul, the Man, the Missionary, and Teacher* (somewhat radical, $2.00, Macmillan); Gilbert's *Students' Life of Paul;* Ramsay's *St. Paul the Traveler* ($3.00, Putnams, 1896). Conybeare and Howson's *Life and Epistles of St. Paul* (many editions and prices) stands at the head for general readers. Stalker's *Life of St. Paul* (60 cts., Am. Tract Soc.); Lewin's *Life of St. Paul* ($9.00, London); Farrar's *Life and Work of St. Paul* (Dutton, all prices); Wm. Taylor's *Paul the Missionary* ($1.50, Harper's); *The Epic of Saul*, a poem by Prof. W. C. Wilkinson ($2.50, Funk & Wagnalls); *The Spiritual Development of Paul*, by G. Matheson, D.D. ($1.75, Randolph). *Paul of Tarsus*, by R. F. Bird ($2.00, Scribners), and *A Life of St. Paul for the Young*, by Geo. L. Weed (50 cts., Jacobs), are especially for young people.

railroad runs, or will when completely finished, from Damascus to Acre on the Mediterranean.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: The Conversion of Saul and its Lessons.

I. THE MAN PAUL.

Names, birth, family, social position, education, personal traits, character.

II. PAUL THE PERSECUTOR (vs. 1, 2).

Why he persecuted so zealously.

III. JESUS HIMSELF ARRESTS HIS CAREER (vs. 3–7).

Kicking against the pricks.

IV. THE GREAT CONFLICT (vs. 8, 9).

The question balanced.
Helps to a decision.

V. COMING INTO THE LIGHT (vs. 10–18).

VI. PAUL THE DISCIPLE (vs. 19–22).

His action as a young disciple.
His preparation for future work.
The change wrought in Paul.
Some lessons about conversion.

PICTURES.

Doré's *St Paul; St. Paul*, Thorwaldsen (Berlin); *Conversion of St. Paul*, Raphael (Vatican); *St. Paul* (miniature), Van Meire (St. Mark's, Venice); *Christ and St. Paul*, Plockhörst; *Conversion of St. Paul*, Rubens; *St. Paul and St. Mark*, Dürer.

I. **The Man Paul.** 1. HIS NAMES. It was common among the Jews in foreign lands to have two names. — *Thatcher.* Saul was Paul's Hebrew name, after the first king. Paul, meaning *little*, was his Roman name, inherited with his Roman citizenship. It was not uncommon among the Roman families. — *Hastings.* It is probable that he had both names from childhood. His family name is nowhere given.

2. HE WAS BORN in Tarsus, probably about A. D. 2.

3. FAMILY AND SOCIAL POSITION. His parents were Jews of pure descent (Phil. 3: 5; Acts 23: 6), strict Pharisees in belief and life, possessed of Roman citizenship, which, says Professor Ramsay, "may be taken as proof that his family was one of distinction, and at least moderate wealth." — *Paul the Traveler, pp. 36, 310–312.* "It is certain," says McGiffert, "that his manners were those of a citizen of the world familiar with the habits of good society, . . . and that he felt at home in association with all classes of people, . . . even in the presence of the supercilious scholars of Athens, or of magistrates, pro-consuls, and princes. . . . He came, therefore, from an honorable and very likely wealthy family, whose dignity and influence must have been considerable." — *Apostolic Age, pp. 114–116.*

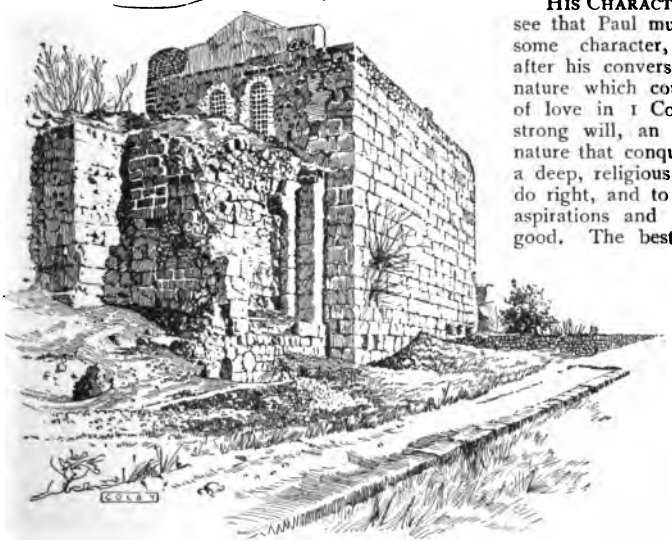
It is apparent from notices in the Epistles, as well as the Acts, that Paul was poor during his early missionary career, while later, in Cesarea and Rome and the voyage between, he appears as a man of distinction and means. Professor Ramsay interprets this as meaning that Paul was disowned and cast off by his family as an apostate and foe to his race and his religion, on account of his becoming a Christian. So he himself says in Phil. 3: 8, that for

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Christ's sake he had suffered the loss of all things, and counted them but refuse; while later he inherited from his father's estate, so that on his voyage Paul had servants and enjoyed much respect, "such as a penniless traveler without a servant to attend on him would never receive either in the first century or the nineteenth." — *Paul the Traveler, pp. 34, 312–316.*

HIS EDUCATION. Till he was about twelve years old Paul lived in the atmosphere of a cultured, refined, scholarly university town. "It is impossible," says Professor Thatcher, "not to see a great difference between him and the twelve in this respect." "He breathed a Grecian atmosphere in his boyhood, but he did not receive a Greek education." The Hebrews "regarded Greek literature, and with some show of reason, as grossly immoral," and would no more have allowed their boys "to study the Greek poets and dramatists than a Puritan in the reign of Charles II. would have set his boy to study the dramatic literature of that age." See Abbott's *Life and Letters of Paul*, pp. 19–22. At an early age he was sent to Jerusalem, where he studied the Law under Gamaliel (Acts 22: 3; 5: 34). The whole atmosphere of Jerusalem must have greatly influenced him, for he was of a deeply religious nature.

HIS PERSONAL TRAITS. As to his personal appearance we are uncertain. The statement he quotes concerning himself (2 Cor. 10: 10) is a sneer of his enemies that "his bodily presence is weak and his speech contemptible." It may have some basis of truth. From all we can gather he was a man of not more than medium stature, and with possibly some personal defect, but a man of physical strength and gracious attractiveness, giving such an impression of power that he could quell mobs to listen, and impress audiences of princes and potentates. At Lystra he was compared to a heathen god, his friend regarded as Jupiter from his size, and Paul as Mercury, who is always represented as vigorous and graceful and eloquent. "In the *Acts of Paul and Thekla*, the first Christian romance, written about 150 A. D., there is a description of Paul which is probably based on a true tradition. In this he is described as 'a man small in size, bald-headed, bandy-legged, well built, with eyebrows meeting, rather long-nosed, and with motions full of grace, for sometimes he seemed like a man and sometimes like an angel. His manner was singularly winning.'" — *Professor Thatcher.* For the story of Paul and Thekla, see Ramsay's *Church in the Roman Empire*, or *Conybeare and Howson*, chap. 6, or Mrs. Jamieson's *Sacred and Legendary Art.* John of Antioch (6th century) and the pseudo-Lucian (4th century) confirm this general impression: "with a genial expression of countenance he was sensible, earnest, easily accessible, sweet, and inspired with the Holy Spirit."



From a Photograph by Bonfils.

Place where Paul was let down in a Basket (Damascus).

HIS CHARACTER. We can easily see that Paul must have had a winsome character, greatly increased after his conversion. He had the nature which could write the glory of love in 1 Cor. 13. He had a strong will, an intense, passionate nature that conquered all obstacles; a deep, religious nature, desiring to do right, and to serve God, full of aspirations and longings after the good. The best description of his mental characteristics is in Lyman Abbott's *Life and Letters of Paul.* He was a seer and a prophet, a great orator, a poet, not scholastic or philosophical. He was not a Calvin, but rather an Isaiah, Plato, Browning, "but a Browning on fire with a moral intensity such as

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1. And[But] [1] Saul, yet breathing out[with] threatenings and[and] slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

2. And[and] desired asked of him letters to Da-măs'cus to[unto] the synagogues, that if he found any that were[of] this way,[the Way,] whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto[to] Je-ru'sa-lĕm.

[1] Acts 8: 3; Gal. 1: 13; 1 Tim. 1: 13.

Browning never knew." "Philosopher among poets is Browning; poet among philosophers is Paul; prophet, seer, preacher, orator, interpreter of Christ's spirit to the thought of the world."

II. Paul the Persecutor. — Vs. 1, 2. **1. And.** R. V., "But," in contrast with Philip and his work for Christ, taking up the narrative from Acts 8: 3. **Saul, yet, still.** Although some time had elapsed, Saul's burning zeal had not declined in fervor. **Breathing out.** Literally, "in." **Threatenings and slaughter,** which "were, as it were, the atmosphere which he breathed, and in and by which he lived." — *Knowling.* Not prayer but persecution was his "vital breath." It must have greatly intensified his rage to see that the more he persecuted the church, the faster it grew; and his every effort to put out the gospel fire but spread the flames. It is quite probable that the fierceness of his zeal against Christians at this time may have been caused partly by the inner conflict of his soul. *Slaughter.* Acts 26: 10 implies that others were martyred besides Stephen. **Went,** of his own accord, a proof of his intense eagerness. **High priest,** who as chief of the Jews exercised authority in such matters.

2. Letters to Damascus. Whither probably not a few of those persecuted in Jerusalem had gone in order to be safe in another province. See "Place." **To the synagogues.** The seat of Jewish authority there. **Any of this way.** Of "the Way," with a capital W. Christ is the way. The gospel is the way. It is the way of salvation, the way of true worship, the way to the kingdom of heaven on earth, the way to heaven. It is the way out of sin, out of the evils of society, out of troubles, out of temptation. It is an ideal, but more: it is the way to reach the ideal. It is a system of morality, but it is more: it bestows the power by which men become moral. **Bring them bound unto Jerusalem,** where was the highest authority who alone could put any to death, or inflict the severest penalties, and where the influences against Christianity were the strongest.

WHY SAUL WAS SO EARNEST TO PERSECUTE CHRISTIANS. The study of the motives of Paul in this persecution, as revealed in the narrative and in the Epistles, is both interesting and helpful. They are most clearly set forth in Matheson's *Spiritual Development of St. Paul* and Abbott's *Life and Letters of Paul.*

1. Paul's opposition was not to the real character of Jesus, but to a caricature received through the prejudiced and deformed views prevalent among his enemies, as if seen in distorting mirrors.



Turkish Letter, or Firman.

Paul would doubtless have loved Jesus had he known him personally as he was. He probably had never seen him. No Gospels were yet written, telling the story of his life and teachings. Jesus was misrepresented as a bastard, a leader of ignorant fishermen, followed by a ragged regiment of the ignorant and vicious, publicans, and harlots. He preached the highest morality, but his keenest satire and severest invective was less against open sinners than the respectable leaders whom he called robbers and hypocrites. He was represented as opposed to the divine Mosaic law, and to the temple whose overthrow he foretold. He was crucified as a blasphemer of religion, a traitor, and disturber of the peace. And yet his followers declared that he was now alive, and these followers were rapidly increasing.

2. But still more: this man crucified as

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3. And [1] as he journeyed, [he it] came [near to pass that he drew nigh unto] Da-măs'cus: and suddenly there [shined shone] round about him a light [from out of] heaven:

4. [And and] he fell [to upon] the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, [2] why persecutest thou me?

5. And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And [the Lord said, he *said*,] I am Jē'sus whom thou persecutest: [3] *it is* hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

[1] Acts 22: 6; 26: 12; 1 Cor. 15: 8. [2] Matt. 25: 40. [3] Acts 5: 39.

a malefactor, accursed of God, claimed to be the Jewish Messiah. This man of suffering, with the following described above, claimed to fulfil all the glorious prophecies and hopes of the nation, while his character, career, and methods were absolutely opposed to all Paul's ideals and hopes. Suffering was incompatible with Messiahship. Suffering was the mark of God's displeasure. Where were the dominion and power, and glory and victories, of the promised kingdom of God? It is no wonder that Paul felt that he must stop this growing heresy, this hope-destroying power, by killing or imprisoning its advocates.



Paul.

Paul is seated in a curule chair, such as was used by the Roman prætors and other persons in authority. From a Roman tablet about fourth century.

3. It is quite probable that the fires of his zeal were intensified by the beginning of an internal conflict. He was kicking against the pricks (v. 5).

III. **Jesus himself arrests his Career.** — Vs. 3–7. 3. **As he journeyed.** Perhaps on horseback, as usually represented by painters, or on a camel, according to Canon Cook; on an ass or mule, according to Felten. And his "followers were some mounted, some on foot, like a caravan of the present day." — *Lewin*. **Near Damascus.** Probably within sight of the beautiful city. Professor Wilkinson represents a terrific thunderstorm on earth; and in the sky, unseen, are the spirits of Stephen and the martyrs whom Paul's zeal had slain for Jesus' sake, like "a great cloud of witnesses," watching and waiting to see the transformation of the fierce persecutor into a loving disciple. **Suddenly** (about noon, Acts 22: 6) **there shined round about him a light from heaven.** "The light was 'above the brightness of the sun' (Acts 26: 13). The midday glare of an eastern sun is of itself exceedingly bright, and the hour was chosen, we cannot doubt, in order that 'the glory' of this heaven-sent light should not be confounded with any natural phenomena. It was in the midst of this glory that *Christ was seen* by Saul (1 Cor. 15: 8), so that he can enumerate himself among those who had beheld the Lord after his resurrection." — *Cambridge Bible*. See also Acts 9: 17, 27. The image of Christ was stamped forever on his memory.

4. **Fell to the earth.** Blinded and amazed. The whole company fell with him. **Heard a voice.** Clear and distinct to him, but a mysterious sound to others (v. 7). We have a picture of Jesus who spoke in Rev. 1: 14–17. St. John, when he saw this vision of Jesus, "fell at his feet as dead." **Saul, Saul.** In the Hebrew tongue (Acts 26: 14). This is curiously confirmed by the fact that in all three accounts the name of Saul here is a transliteration of the Hebrew way of spelling Saul, *Saoul*, while in every other case the Greek form *Saulos* is used. **Why persecutest thou me?** He thought he was persecuting the disciples of a poor rabbi, an impostor, a crucified malefactor; and instead, he now saw that he was persecuting this glorious being, this living and glorified Jesus, worthy indeed to be the Messiah.

5. **Who art thou, Lord?** "This is more than 'Sire,' 'Sir,' a title of respect." — *Knowling*. **Whom thou persecutest,** in the person of his disciples. So in Matt. 10: 40,

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6. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, 1 what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, but rise, and go enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

7. And [2] the men which that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a the voice, but seeing beholding no man.

8. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but nothing; and they led him by the hand, and brought him him into Da-măs'cus.

[1] Luke 3: 10; Acts 2: 37; 16: 30. [2] Dan. 10: 7; Acts 22: 9; 26: 13. *a* Or, *sound.*

"He that receiveth you, receiveth me," and in Matt. 25: 40, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

So in "The Vision of Sir Launfal," the knight found that the desolate leper he fed was the Christ who suddenly

> "Stood before him glorified,
> Shining and tall and fair and straight
> As the pillar that stood by the Beautiful gate."
>
> "Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,—
> Himself, his hungering neighbor, and Me."

To kick against the pricks, *i. e.*, *goads*, as unruly oxen sometimes did. The more they kicked against them, the more they injured themselves, without escaping from their work. "This was a common Greek proverb, expressive of the impotent rage which hurts itself instead of its object, and is found in Æschylus, Euripides, and Pindar."—*Eugene Stock*. This expression, and the first clause of v. 6, are omitted in the R. V., because omitted from the best manuscripts; but they belong to the story, because we find them in Paul's own account of his conversion (Acts 22: 10; 26: 14).

KICKING AGAINST THE GOADS. Paul was fighting against his own awakened conscience; against the true interpretation of the prophecies concerning the Messiah; against the truth about Jesus; against the influences of the Holy Sprit; against the providence of God; against eternal and invincible forces.

COMPARE Thor in the home of Odin, in the Scandinavian legends. See *Heroes and Hero Worship*, p. 34.

6. Trembling and astonished. Not in the best manuscripts, but a true description. Many a sinner feels in the same way when he first sees himself as he is, sees the true picture of his moral character and past life, in contrast with the vision of Jesus and of God in their holy character. **What wilt thou have me to do?** This is the next step in the inquirer's progress. He would see clearly what is required of him. He would make his decision, with all the facts before him. **Arise, and go into the city** (Damascus), **and it shall be told thee,** etc. He was not yet prepared for the full revelation of his duty. It takes time for the new thoughts and purposes to become calm and clear, for his decisions to mature. The experience of mature Christians can be a great help to one inquiring the way. Such was Evangelist to Bunyan's Christian.

NOTE the three steps of Paul's progress toward the light: (1) conviction; (2) desire to learn the way; (3) help from Christian experience.

7. Stood speechless. "It is frivolous to find a contradiction here with Acts 26: 14" (where it is said they all fell to the ground). *Stood* is used not in contrast with falling, but with moving on. The standing does not preclude a previous falling. "We have only to suppose that the sight and sound had affected Saul's companions in a less degree than Saul, and that they rose from the ground before him, to make the narratives quite consistent."—*Knowling*. **Hearing a voice.** The sound of the voice, without understanding it (Acts 22: 9). That it was the sound, and not the articulate meaning of v. 4, is implied by a change of construction in the Greek. (So Rendall, Knowling, etc.). Even without the change of construction, it is a constant, familiar way of speaking. We often speak of not hearing a man when we hear his voice, but do not hear what he says. **But seeing no man.** The bystanders saw the light (Acts 22: 9), but no person, implying that Paul did see Jesus as he states in 1 Cor. 15: 8.

IV. **The Great Conflict.**—Vs. 8, 9. **8. When his eyes were opened** (the lids unclosing) **he saw no man.** Imperfect tense denoting a continued blindness. *No man*, μηδένα. R. V. has a different reading, οὐδένα, *nothing*. "This blindness was the clearest proof that the appearances vouchsafed had been a reality."

Lyman Abbott refers to Constantine who thought he saw a cross in the sky; to Loyola who saw hosts of good and evil set in battle array against each other. "Were these real visions? I know no reason why we should think they were not."

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9. And he was three days without sight, and neither did did neither eat nor drink.

10. And Now there was a certain disciple at Da-măs'cus, [1] named An-a-nī'as; and to him said the Lord the Lord said unto him in a vision, An-a-nī'as. And he said, Behold, I *am here*, Lord.

[1] Acts 22: 12.

9. And he was three days without sight. The blindness of Saul was, no doubt, mercifully intended by providence to compel him to attend without distraction to the great matters which had been placed before him. The state of his mind may be gathered from the fact that he took no food or drink during that interval.

ILLUSTRATION. Charles Mackay has a poem in which Milton, blind to the blue sky, "sees the bowers of paradise"; and Beethoven, "Music's Great High Priest," deaf to all sound, yet in his soul hears "jubilant hymns and lays of love."

"To blind old Milton's rayless orbs
A light divine is given,
And deaf Beethoven hears the hymns
And harmonies of heaven."

"And when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
The Thing became a trumpet, whence he blew
Soul-animating strains — alas, too few."
— *Wordsworth.*

"On my bended knee
I recognize thy purpose clearly shown;
My vision thou hast dimmed, that I may see
Thyself, thyself alone."
— *Miss E. Lloyd* on *Milton's Blindness.*

LIBRARY. Bushnell's *Moral Uses of Dark Things.*

THE CONFLICT. Without doubt, these three days were a season of intense inward conflict, alone and in darkness. It may be compared to the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness. The seventh chapter of Romans gives us some idea of one part of this conflict.

On the one side was his duty, his allegiance to truth, his call from heaven, his conscience, the true, the beautiful, but less worldly and brilliant career for his nation and the world.

On the other hand was the necessity of giving up his ambitions and hopes; his family who would doubtless cast him off; his friends among the rulers; his wealth exchanged for poverty; his honors for sneers, reproaches, and hate; his comfortable life for danger, toil, and death. Even more than these personal matters was the question concerning the glorious hopes for his nation, the ideals and visions of the prophets, of Jerusalem, the capital of the world, of all nations bowing down to the Jews and their religion, the Gentiles coming to its light, and kings to the brightness of its rising (Isa. 60: 2), and all that magnificent picture more radiant with glory than the greatest poet ever dreamed. How could this come to pass with an obscure teacher for the Messiah, and even him crucified. Then how could he give up the Word of God as he understood it, and the religion God had given them.

On the other hand he had some helps to a decision.

1. "Versed as he was in the Bible, he could, even in his blindness, search the Scriptures, and, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, was enabled clearly to discern the whole scheme of Christian doctrine in its fulness and truth." — *Kitto.*

2. He had seen something of the moral beauties of the disciples of Christ, in contrast with the character of most of the Jews. A nation of Stephens and Johns would be wonderful in its spiritual and political life.

3. His vision of Jesus proved that he was alive. He could not believe in a dead Messiah. The vision rolled away the stone from the sepulcher, and Paul saw an ascended, divine, glorious Messiah.

4. During this time probably was brought before him the vision of what God would have him do, the work for which he was chosen by God, a glorious and blessed work (Acts 26: 16–18), and perhaps also some of his sufferings for Christ's sake (v. 16). This was a strong motive for deciding aright. For any true soul there is no louder call to be a Christian than the call to heroism, to work, and to suffer for the most glorious cause ever presented to the soul of man.

V. **Coming into the Light.** — Vs. 10–18. **10. A certain disciple . . . named Ananias.** It is good to have some one to redeem the name. We know nothing further about him except that "he was a good man, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt" at Damascus (Acts 22: 12).

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11. And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go (unto to) the street which is called Straight, and (enquire inquire) in the house of Jū'das for (one called one named) Saul, (a man) [1] of Tär'sus: for behold, he prayeth;

12. (And and he) hath seen (in a vision) a man named An-a-nī'as coming in, and (putting his hand laying his hands) on him, that he might receive his sight.

13. (Then But) An-a-nī'as answered, Lord, I have heard (by from) many of this man, [2] how much evil he (hath done did) to thy saints at Je-ru'sa-lĕm:

14. (And and) here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all [3] that call (on upon) thy name.

15. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for [4] he is a [a] chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before [5] the Gĕn'tīles, and [6] kings, and the children of Is'ra-el:

16. (For for) [7] I will shew him how (great many) things he must suffer for my name's sake.

17. [8] And An-a-nī'as (went his way, departed,) and entered into the house; and [9] (putting laying) his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, *even* Jē'sus, (that who) appeared unto thee in the way (as which) thou camest, hath sent me, that thou (mightest mayest) receive thy sight, and [10] be filled with the Hō'ly Ghōst.

18. And (immediately straightway) there fell from his eyes as it (had been were) scales: and he received (his) sight, (forthwith,) and (he) arose, and was baptized;

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[1] Acts 21: 39.
[2] V. 1.
[3] V. 21; Acts 7: 59; 1 Cor. 1: 2; 2 Tim. 2: 22.
[4] Acts 13: 2; 22: 21; 26: 17; Rom. 1: 1; 1 Cor. 15: 10.
[5] Rom. 1: 5; Gal. 2: 7, 8.
[6] Acts 25: 22, 23; 26: 1.
[7] Acts 20: 23; 2 Cor. 11: 23.
[8] Acts 22: 12.
[9] Acts 8: 17.
[10] Acts 2: 4; 4: 31; 8: 17.
a Greek, *vessel of election.*

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11. Street . . . called Straight. "A main thoroughfare of the city going straight from the eastern to the western gate. It was a mile long; it was a hundred feet wide, and divided by Corinthian columns into three avenues." — *Lewin.* **In the house of Judas.** Nothing is known of him. He was probably not then a Christian, but one to whom Paul had letters. **Behold, he prayeth.** He is asking God for light and help.

Therefore God sends the answer first, by (12) **a vision** of what was to be, so that he would recognize the true answer to his prayer in the presence of Ananias.

13. Then Ananias answered. Ananias naturally hesitated to go to the house of the well-known opponent of the gospel, and to put himself in the power of his guest who had done so much harm, and had come to Damascus to do more. It was the lamb "bearding the lion in his den." This hesitation does not prove Ananias to be either disobedient or faithless. He only wanted to be sure that he understood, for the command was so strange. **Thy saints.** Consecrated to the service of God, and therefore morally holy. This is the first time the word is applied to Christians.

15. A chosen vessel. "A *selected* instrument, *i. e.*, selected by God, and for the purpose indicated in the remainder of the sentence." — *Abbott.* "One of the clearest intellects that ever glowed in a human frame changed hands that day." — *Arnot.* It was this experience that led Paul to feel so deeply the divine side of conversion. God chose him before he chose God. **Unto me.** Not only chosen by me, but prepared for me and devoted to me. **Gentiles.** Paul was especially the apostle to the Gentiles. **And kings.** "Paul fulfilled this when he appeared before Agrippa at Cesarea (Acts 26: 1, 13), and perhaps the Emperor Nero at Rome (2 Tim. 4: 17), and when he pleaded before the tribunals of the Roman governors Sergius Paulus, Gallio, Felix, and Festus." — *Schaff.*

17. Brother Saul. A Christian brother. **Sight . . . Holy Ghost.** He brought two great gifts, — sight, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. The receiving of sight expressed the opening of the eyes of his mind to the new light from heaven, and was to him a proof that he had received the power of the Spirit, the extraordinary gifts and qualifications needful for his work.

18. There fell from his eyes as it had been scales. Not actual scales, but something resembling them. "He experienced the sensation as if there had fallen something like scales from his eyes." — *Gloag.* The Greek for scales is the regular medical term.

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19. And when and he had received meat, he took food and was strengthened. [1] Then And he was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Da-măs'cus.

20. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, in the synagogues he proclaimed Je'sus, [2] that he is the Son of God.

[1] Acts 26: 20. [2] Acts 8: 37.

Was baptized. As a confession of Christ, and the divine method of admission to the membership of the disciples.

VI. **Paul the Disciple.** — Vs. 19–22. **19. When he had received meat,** *i. e.*, "food." The three days' fast (v. 9) and the intense inward conflict had obviously brought about a state of extreme prostration. **He was strengthened,** both spiritually and bodily. His physical condition was attended to. So God fed Elijah when he was desponding. Due care of the body is sometimes a means of grace. **Certain days.** A few days.

FIRST: PAUL WENT TO WORK IMMEDIATELY FOR HIS MASTER. **20. Straightway.** Immediately. **Preached** (proclaimed) **Christ** (Jesus) **in the synagogues.** He gave his religious experience, testifying to what Jesus had done for him, and that Jesus was the Messiah. The common version says *Christ*, that is, the true Messiah, who was Jesus. The R. V. says "Jesus," that is, that Jesus was the true Messiah whom the Jews hoped for and the prophets had foretold.

SECOND: PAUL WENT INTO RETIREMENT. From a comparison of the following verses with Gal. 1: 15–18, we learn, that after preaching awhile he went into Arabia, either in the desert regions near Damascus, or in the region of Sinai, full of memories of Moses and Elijah. Here he remained three years. There was need of no little meditation and study before Paul could understand the Scriptures sufficiently to preach them aright. So Christ waited till he was 30 years old before he began his mission.

ILLUSTRATIONS. There is a mental crystallization going on in the hours of rest which are needed by every soul. So hyacinth bulbs need several weeks of rest in darkness after they are planted, in order to form roots, or they will not flower strongly.

LIBRARY. Trumbull's *Studies in Oriental Life*, "Lessons in the Wilderness." Hugh Miller's *My Schools and Schoolmasters* and Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* give the story of the preparation and training of men for their greater work. Almost every biography of great men shows the same period, longer or shorter, of preparation.

THIRD: THE LONGER PREPARATION. From Arabia Paul returned to Damascus, where he was persecuted, and escaped in a basket let down through a window over the walls of the city (2 Cor. 11: 32, 33). He then went to Jerusalem for the first time since his conversion. Here, too, he was persecuted, and retired to his native region, of which Tarsus was the capital. It was some years before he fully entered upon his great work.

THE CHANGE WROUGHT IN PAUL BY HIS CONVERSION. FIRST. The purpose and trend of his life was changed. Henceforth he lived wholly for Jesus and for the salvation of men. The change was not in patriotism, or in care for religion, or in energy, or mental vigor, but in the use to which he put all these. He was like a fine engine with all its powers switched off on another track, in another direction. He was like a servant who changed masters; like an emigrant who took the oath of allegiance to another country.

SECOND. He was changed in his relations to Jesus. He now accepted him as the Messiah, the Saviour of the world.

THIRD. He was changed in the quality of his morality. Before, he was sincere, but sincerely wrong; now he was sincerely right. Before, he was self-righteous; now his morality was inspired by love. Before, he was formally legal, pharisaical, narrow, in his virtues; now his moral character grew out of a new heart and a right spirit.

FOURTH. He was changed in his views of religion and of God, and in his understanding of God's Word.

FIFTH. Hence he was changed in his life-work. Thus he was indeed a new creation, with new life, new character, new motives, new hopes, new love, new purpose, new work.

SUDDEN CONVERSIONS VERSUS GRADUAL CHANGES. 1. There are many ways in which persons become Christians; compare Paul with John; Matthew with most of the other apostles; Luther and his long struggle, with John Bunyan who could not tell the day of his conversion. There is no model or form to which all must conform. The City of God has twelve gates, four on each side, so that persons can enter from every direction. Christians "are not made by machinery, like pins, all heads alike."

2. The one essential question is not how one becomes a Christian, but the fact. If one

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really believes in Christ, gives himself to him to love and obey, turns from sin to righteousness, he is a Christian in whatever way he reaches that condition.

3. In one sense there are seldom, if ever, absolutely instantaneous conversions, for there are always circumstances and influences preparing the way. On the other hand, there is, probably, a definite time when one has actually changed his course of life, whether he is conscious of it or not. The astronomers give us the exact moment when night becomes day, and winter changes to spring; but to our observation few can tell when the day actually begins, and none the moment when spring has arrived. But the day and the spring actually come. When a great ship is turning around in a large circle, it is impossible by sight to determine when it has ceased going north, and is moving to the south. But however unconsciously to the observer, the change of direction takes place.

4. It is often an advantage to have some definite expression of the change, some outward sign to mark its existence. Thus there was no different movement of sun or stars at the moment when the nineteenth century closed, and the twentieth began, but many thousands of people marked the moment in some way, by prayer or song, or bugle note.

5. It is well to guard against the error which Bishop Williams represents those who believe in sudden conversions as holding, "that the work of and for St. Paul, in character and life, was all done at once, 'in the twinkling of an eye,' in his conversion." But I never knew any converted person who so believed. Conversion is but *the beginning* of the Christian life and character. But the turning may be a sudden change of direction, or the movement in a circle so large that one does not know the exact time when the direction of his course was reversed.

6. Changes in men, like this in Saul, are the greatest proofs of Christianity. They are the miracles that appear through its whole course of almost nineteen centuries.

LIBRARY. Lord Lyttleton's *Observations on the Conversion of St. Paul*, written in the reign of George II., by the Lord Lyttleton of that day, famous as a historian and a poet.

LESSON II. — April 13.

PETER, ÆNEAS, AND DORCAS. — Acts 9 : 32–43.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***Jesus Christ maketh thee whole.*** — ACTS 9: 34.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Starting Points.— 1. Keep in mind the last lesson, about the conversion of Paul, and our glimpse into his after life.

2. Return to the general history of the extension of the church, by means of the persecution (Acts 8) of Philip, Simon Magus, Peter, the Ethiopian, Paul. After a time the persecution ceased, but the work continued.

3. A map showing the country.

4. A glimpse at Roman history (as below).

On the Way. — We now enter upon five lessons (Acts 9: 31–12: 19) describing the work of the disciples, and especially of Peter, with hints of Agabus, James, Barnabas, and Paul.

Whither Going? — All this points to the extension of the gospel in other lands, to the widening of thought and view, to the deepening of piety, to the reception of the Gentiles, to a universal religion, to the great missionary work of Paul.

LEARN BY HEART.

John 11: 25, 26; 1 Tim. 6: 18, 19; Matt. 25: 45.

THE SECTION.

Acts 9: 31–43. Compare Luke 10: 1–24.

PLACE IN THE HISTORY.

The Persecution had ceased, and the churches had rest.

The Church has now been about ten years in existence, and has spread widely in the last three years, and increased rapidly. We hear of Christians not only in Palestine, but in Damascus, Cyprus, Cilicia, in Asia Minor, Antioch, and one, at least, in Ethiopia.

At the close of the persecution, Paul's life moves on in silent obscurity, while he is being prepared for his missionary work; and we continue the history recorded in Acts 8: 25–40.

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CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

These can be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

Causes of the rest.
Edifying the church.
Multiplying the church.
Christian care for poor and sick.
Lessons from raising the dead.
Effect of Dorcas' deeds on the church.
Why Peter resided with Simon the tanner.

PICTURES.

St. Peter healing the Sick, Masaccio (Florence); *St. Peter Preaching*, Fra Angelico (Florence); *Miracles of St. Peter and St. Paul*, Masaccio (Florence); *St. George and the Dragon*, Raphael (Louvre).

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

Dr. Wm. M. Taylor's *Peter the Apostle* (Harpers); *Simon Peter*, by C. S. Robinson, LL.D. (Tract Soc.); Trumbull's *Studies in Oriental Social Life*, "Calls for Healing in the East" (Scribners); Lewin's *Fasti Sacri*.

On the state of the times through which the church had rest from persecution, see Josephus' *Antiquities*, XVIII., 8, 8, and his *Wars* II., 10; and Geikie's *New Testament Hours*, "The Apostles," vol. I., "Palestine under Caligula." The facts are powerfully depicted in Mrs. Charles' story, *The Victory of the Vanquished*.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. Probably A. D. 38–40.

Place. Lydda, a city in northwestern Judea, twenty-five miles slightly northwest of Jerusalem, and Joppa, a seaport on the Mediterranean, ten miles northwest of Lydda.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: Characteristic Deeds of a Home Missionary Church.

I. REST FROM PERSECUTION. PEACEFUL TIMES (v. 31).
Causes of the cessation of persecution.

II. THE CHURCH EDIFIED (v. 31).

III. THE CHURCH'S DAILY LIFE.

IV. THE CHURCH MULTIPLIED.
Two ways of being multiplied.

V. HEALING THE SICK (vs. 32–35).
Æneas. Lessons.

VI. HELPING THE POOR (v. 36).
Dorcas. Lessons.

VII. RAISING THE DEAD (vs. 37–43).
Dorcas. Peter. Simon the tanner.
Practical lessons.

I. The Rest from Persecution. Peaceful Times for the Church. — V. 31. How long the persecution lasted after Saul's conversion we do not know, but it probably burned out in two or three years. There were not many with Saul's fiery zeal.

But the probable reason for its cessation lay in the troubles the Jews were having with their Roman rulers. They themselves were being persecuted, and this left no time or opportunity for them to persecute Christians.

Caius Cesar Caligula became emperor of Rome in A. D. 37. His was a strange, self-willed, ungodly character. The Roman emperors claimed divine honors, and statues and altars were erected to them. Caligula not only demanded to be worshiped, but raised his horse to the consulship. At Jamnia, in upper Galilee, the Syrians, in A. D. 39, erected an altar to the emperor Caligula, and the Jews immediately tore it down. Caligula was enraged at the affront, and determined to erect his statue in the very temple at Jerusalem, and issued orders to the governor Petronius to set it up there, with the inscription, "Caius, the New Incarnation of Jupiter." This command meant the kindling of all the ferocity of a religious war. The Jewish officials declared that such an outrage could not be carried out except over the dead bodies of the citizens. The whole population streamed toward Ptolemais, the modern Acre, where the governor was, covering the country far and wide, and raising continually such cries and wailing as made the townspeople declare they would lose their hearing. Finally, a vast throng, arranged in six columns, of old women, matrons, maids, old men, men in their strength, and boys, gathered before the palace of the proconsul, and threw themselves on the earth with wild and piteous outcries of despair, when he showed himself on the balcony. They declared they would die, but never give way. Petronius made every effort to have the emperor change the edict. But the most he could obtain was a command to leave the temple untouched. But many altars were raised to the emperor outside of its gates; and news came that all the synagogues in Alexandria had been turned into temples to Cesar. These things lasted till January, A. D. 41, on the

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31. [1] Then had / So the churches rest / church throughout all Jū-dæ'a and Găl'ĭ-lee and Sa-mā'rĭ-a' and were / had peace, being [a] edified; and, walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Hō'ly Ghōst, were / was multiplied.

[1] Acts 8: 1. *a* Greek, *builded up*.

twenty-fourth day of which Caligula was murdered. — *From Lewin and Geikie.* Under these circumstances the infant church enjoyed a period of four or five years of rest from persecution by the Jews, who were fully occupied with their own troubles. It was a time of outward peace, of rest from conflict, and hence a season of growth, of spiritual development, of Christian activity.

LIBRARY. See the whole story told at length in Josephus' *Antiq.*, XVIII., 8, 8, and in his *Wars*, II., 10. This story, which is little known to Bible students, is most interesting.

II. **The Church Edified.** — V. 31. **Edified.** This English word (from *ædis*, "a dwelling-house," "a temple," *i. e.*, "a house for God"; and *facere*, "to make") has almost exactly the same meaning as the Greek οἰκοδομούμενοι, *being built up*. It is a process like the building of a house. This is true of the church as a whole, and of individual Christians (Eph. 2: 20–22; 1 Cor. 3: 17; 2 Cor. 6: 16). The spiritual temple is builded not like Aladdin's palace, in an instant, but by a long process. The plan is given by God, the foundation is Jesus Christ; there are many parts for many uses; all virtues are its precious stones. There are altars of worship; windows to let in light; it should be beautiful within and without; it should be filled with the Holy Spirit, the home of all that is heavenly.

ILLUSTRATION. The church at rest is like a person in a healthy body, who does not need to spend time in thinking of his health, in seeking remedies, in looking after himself, but can devote all his energies and thought to the work he has to do.

They had the rest of faith, of a firm confidence in God, in Christ, in the Bible, in the promises. They had the rest of certainty. Amid the various conflicts raging around us to-day, it is well to look more steadily at the certainties. The essential truths of morality, of religion, and of the Bible are fixed and settled. They are like an island of rock amid mists and waves. The winds of conflict scatter the mists, but do not move the island.

ILLUSTRATION. "In a little poem," says the *S. S. Times*, "Alice W. Rollins tells of watching a potter, whose one foot was kept with 'never-slackening speed, turning his swift wheel round,' while the other foot rested patiently on the ground. When he heard the exclamation of sympathy with him in his toil, 'How tired his foot must be!' the potter corrected the common mistake as to the real source of weariness; —

> "'Slowly he raised his patient eyes,
> With homely truth inspired:
> "No, marm, it isn't the foot that *kicks*,
> The one that *stands* gets tired."'"

III. **The Church's Daily Life. Walking in the fear of the Lord.** "Leading a God-fearing life, by which the edification exhibited itself in the moral conduct." — *Meyer.* "It is the temper of reverential awe, the scrupulous obedience to the commandments of God, which had been described of old as 'the beginning' of wisdom." — *Plumptre.* It implies care to avoid everything which would grieve him. **In the comfort of the Holy Ghost.** παρακλήσει, from παρακαλέω, *to call to one's side*, in order to help or comfort ("comforter" in John 14: 16, etc., is another form of the same word); hence *exhortation*, *i. e.*, aiding by words, or *consolation*, or *advocating*, as a counselor aids by defending our cause against our adversary. "Comfort" means *strengthening together*, the strength that comes from the presence, the inspiration, the invigoration, the courage of another. So Æschylus, in describing the battle of Salamis, represents the commanders of both fleets as "comforting" the soldiers by going from vessel to vessel, and rousing their courage with brave and inspiring words.

LIBRARY. Wright's *Master and Man*, p. 77, on comfort; Aldis Wright's *Bible Word Book*, pp. 146, 147, for examples of this use.

IV. **The Multiplied Church. Were multiplied.** There are two ways to be multiplied, — in numbers, and in quality and value. The disciples rapidly increased in numbers, and the aggregate of churches was greatly enlarged. Then each addition of zeal, of knowledge, of wisdom, of virtue, of spirituality, multiplies the value of each disciple, and of the church. Every additional gift or virtue or talent in a man is not merely so much added to him, but is a multiplier, for it increases the value of each and every other gift.

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32. And it came to pass, as Pē'ter (passed, went) [1] throughout all (quarters, parts,) he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lyd'da.

33. And there he found a certain man named Ænē'ăs, which had kept his bed eight years; (and was sick of the palsy, for he was palsied.)

34. And Pē'ter said unto him, Ænē'ăs, [2] Jē'sus Chrīst (maketh healeth) thee: (whole:) arise, and make thy bed. And (he arose immediately, straightway he arose.)

35. And all that dwelt at Lyd'da and [3] (Sa'ron, in Shar'on) saw him, and (they) [4] turned to the Lord.

[1] Acts 8: 14. [2] Acts 3: 6, 16; 4: 10. [3] 1 Chron. 5: 16. [4] Acts 11: 21.

Add capital to labor, and both are multiplied. Add common sense to genius, and the man is multiplied many fold. Add to these consecration, zeal, grace, and love, and you multiply him many fold more. One note is a sound; add a score or two more and you have an anthem. One color no matter how beautiful is monotonous; add other colors and you have a cathedral window.

V. **Healing the Sick.** — Vs. 32–35. **32. As Peter passed throughout all quarters.** He went everywhere visiting and encouraging and teaching the new churches formed by the persecuted Christians, and keeping them in touch with the apostolic church in Jerusalem. Peter did more for the church at Jerusalem by going on these evangelizing tours than by concentrating all energies on Jerusalem alone. Work beyond its borders always aids the home church. "It is like the dew of heaven. It is twice blessed; it blesseth him that gives, and him that takes." **The saints which dwelt at Lydda.** All Christians were called saints, because that was their aim and the characteristic of their lives. Lydda, in the rich plain of Sharon in northwest Judea, was a city of considerable size, about a day's journey from Jerusalem. Here, according to tradition, was born St. George, "the patron saint of England," the hero of the mythical story of St. George and the Dragon, immortalized in poetry and painting.

33. **He found.** As he went about doing good. It was not chance, but providence, in connection with his own seeking for ways to help others. **Named Æneas.** Very nearly the same as Æneas (with "ei" instead of "e" in middle syllable), the hero of Troy in Virgil's poem. **Kept his bed eight years.** So that the cure must have been miraculous. **And was sick of the palsy.** *Palsy* is a contraction of the word "paralysis." The term is used by the ancient physicians in a much wider sense than by our modern men of science. It included not only what we call paralysis, which is rarely very painful, but also catalepsy and tetanus, *i. e.*, cramps and lockjaw. Both were very painful and dangerous.

See SELECT NOTES, 1894, pp. 292, 293.

34. **Jesus Christ.** That is, the Messiah. Peter guards against being thought the source of the healing. He draws men not to himself, but to the Saviour. So the true preacher or teacher always "hides behind the cross." He draws attention not to himself, but to his Lord. **Maketh thee whole.** This is a very expressive term for complete health, where every part of the body is present and in perfect condition. It is the type of a holy soul. **Arise, and make thy bed.** "The bed (κραββάτου of v. 33), even in wealthy houses," says Dr. Tristram in the *S. S. Times*, "is, simply, it may be, a mat, or a Persian rug, or sheepskins or goatskins sewed together, or a quilted coverlet stuffed with wool. The first act on rising is, naturally, to roll up the bed, to prevent its being trodden on. This simple act of rolling up is here called making the bed." He was henceforth to do for himself what others had done for him, as the proof that he was cured and could take care of himself. **Immediately.** Showing that the cure was miraculous. Peter remembered what his Lord had done (Mark 2: 11, 12).



Oriental Bed.

35. **And Saron.** R. V., Sharon, a plain celebrated for its beauty and

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36. Now there was at Jŏp'pa a certain disciple named Tăb'i-tha, which by interpretation is called [a] Dor'cas: this woman was full [1] of good works and almsdeeds which she did.

[1] 1 Tim. 2: 10; Tit. 3: 8. [a] That is, *Gazelle.*

fertility, and "the rose of Sharon." It was the district of which Lydda was the chief city. **And turned to the Lord.** Had their attention turned to the Lord, and recognized him as the Messiah.

NOTE 1. To those who are seeking to do good, new opportunities will continually come, opportunities which those who are waiting in idleness will never find, nor see even when they come before their eyes. What Ruskin says of our physical sight is true of our spiritual sight: that we see what we are looking for, and that the power to see is one of the greatest of all gifts.

NOTE 2. Good works toward the sick and unfortunate, expressing the true character of our religion, and of our Saviour, and his power over men for good, form one of the strongest influences drawing men to Christ. The more Christians do for the poor, the sick, the unfortunate, the more will they be multiplied.

VI. **Helping the Poor.** — V. 36. **There was at Joppa** (Beautiful). The modern Jaffa, the seaport of Jerusalem, thirty miles to the northwest, with which it is now connected by railway. It was a flourishing city in the time of the apostles. It was a seaport in the time of Solomon; and Jonah set sail from this port for Spain. **A certain disciple named Tabitha.** This in Syriac, the common language of the region, means *splendor, beauty.* **Called Dorcas** (Gazelle), which in the East was a favorite type of beauty. *Dorcas* is Greek, the language of the cultured class, and of the officials. The gazelle is the type of timidity, beauty, and grace. It is "called *dorcas* by the Greeks on account of its bright, flashing eyes." We do not know whether this expresses her outward appearance as "a lovely and beautiful woman, full of alertness and grace; or her spiritual loveliness and grace, which all can have, and which brings an attractiveness that no outward grace alone can produce. There is no way to be so attractive, personally, as to be full of good works done in the most graceful, that is, heavenly manner. "I will make you," said the Roman maiden, "love me not only in spite of my deformity, but because of it." So good works can transform even homeliness into charm, as in the reflection of the rays we forget the form of the jewel. **Was full of good works and almsdeeds.** Especially in making coats and garments for widows, who in that country were a most unfortunate class (v. 39). She was full not of works she thought of and dreamed of doing, but of those **which she did,** (imperfect tense) was in the habit of doing. The tense is imperfect because the action was not completed; she was still doing.

REMARKS 1. Good works for the poor are characteristic of the Christian religion.

2. They are proofs of discipleship (Matt. 25: 34-46; Jas. 1: 27). Not much flows from the stagnant pool of formal religion, but much from a fountain of living water in the soul. Good trees must bring forth good fruits in their season. We are God's children when we do God's works.

ILLUSTRATION. Leigh Hunt's poem, "Abou ben Adhem," who, when the angel appeared to him with his book, in which were written "the names of those who love the Lord," asked that his own name might be written as "one who loves his fellowmen." The angel appeared again, —

> "And showed the names whom love of God had blessed,
> And lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest."

3. The personal element, the giving of one's self with the gift, is a necessary part of good works for the sick and poor. It is as necessary for the giver as for the receiver.

LIBRARY. Lowell's "Vision of Sir Launfal" illustrates this truth: —

4. Daily deeds of personal help, done with the highest motives, exalt, ennoble, and transfigure the life.

5. Doing good works for the poor saves us from the dangers and the narrowness of worldliness. It broadens our thoughts, uplifts our motives.

6. This is the way to lay up treasures in heaven. It develops the heavenly character. It makes sweeter music, greater raptures, wider visions possible.

LIBRARY ILLUSTRATIONS. The story of the Apostle Thomas and the palace he built for King Gondoforus. — *Foster.* "Legend of Strasburg Cathedral," in *The Uplands of God.*

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37. And it came to pass in those days, that she (was fell) sick, and died: (whom and) when they had washed (her, her) they laid in [1] an upper chamber.

38. And (forasmuch) as Lyd'da was nigh (unto, to) Jŏp'pa, (and) the disciples, (had heard hearing) that Pē'ter was there, (they) sent (unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay two men unto him, intreating him, Delay not) to come (to them. on unto us.)

39. (Then And) Pē'ter arose and went with them. (When And when) he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dor'cas made, while she was with them.

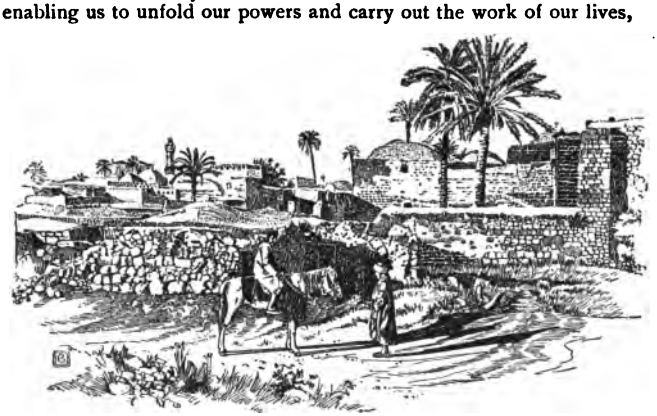
[1] Acts 1: 13.

"The Angels in the Kitchen," in Wm. Gannett's *Blessed be Drudgery*. "Beautiful Hands," in Dr. J. R. Miller's *Practical Religion*. The poem, "Wrought into Gold," and many other illustrations in *Suggestive Illustrations* on the Acts.

VII. **Raising the Dead.** — Vs. 37-43. **37. She was sick, and died.** Possibly as a martyr to her over-exertions in behalf of the poor; and she may wear a martyr's crown as really as Stephen or Peter.

"These, though their names appear not on the scroll
Of martyrologists, laid down their life
Not less a martyrdom in Jesus' eyes —
For his dear brethren's sake, watching the couch
Of loathsome sickness, or of slow decay,
Or visiting the captive in his cell,
Or struggling with a burden not their own
Until their weary life-strings wore away —
These, too, are martyrs, brother."
— *Bickersteth.*

Even the best of people sometimes die early. God knows the best time for us to die. An immortal life beyond, enabling us to unfold our powers and carry out the work of our lives, renders it of less account to ourselves when we die. And yet it is a great privilege to be able to continue our work on earth. **Laid her in an upper chamber.** "In Jerusalem no corpse lay over night, but outside Jerusalem three days might elapse between death and burial, in special cases." — *Knowling*.



From a Photograph by Bonfils.
General View of Lydda.

38. Lydda was nigh to Joppa. Nine miles. — *Knowling*. Ten miles. — *Hastings*. **Heard that Peter was there.** "It was too late to send for a physician, but not too late to send for Peter. A physician after death is an absurdity, but not an apostle after death." — *M. Henry*. The burial preparations, and the delay in order to reach Peter, showed that death had actually taken place. **Delay to come to them.** They knew that Peter had wrought some great miracles in Jesus' name, though he had not restored the dead. But they hoped that he might help them in some way. He must hasten, as every hour's delay tended to decay of the body, and lessened the hope of restoration.

39. When he was come . . . the widows stood by him weeping. The poor widows for whom Dorcas had made the **coats** (χιτῶνας, *close fitting under garments*) **and garments** (ἱμάτια, *long-flowing outer robes, or mantles*), **which** (Greek, what a quantity, how many). **Dorcas made.** Was accustomed to make. **Shewing.** By pointing to the garments they had on (so the Greek).

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40. But Pē'ter [1] put them all forth, and [2] kneeled down, and prayed; and turning *him* to the body, he [3] said, Tăb'i-tha, arise. And she opened her eyes; and when she saw Pē'ter, she sat up.

41. And he gave her *his* hand, and *lifted* her up; and *when he had called* the saints and widows, he presented her alive.

42. And it *was* known throughout all Jŏp'pa; [4] and many believed *in* the Lord.

43. And it came to pass, that he *tarried* many days in Jŏp'pa with one [5] Sī'mon a tanner.

[1] Matt. 9: 25. [2] Acts 7: 60. [3] Mark 5: 41, 42; John 11: 43. [4] John 11: 45; 12: 11. [5] Acts 10: 6.

40. Peter put them all forth, as Christ did from the room of Jairus' daughter, and as Elijah, in restoring the Shunammite's son. This would keep him from interruption; he could concentrate his mind on the Lord's will as to Tabitha; it would avoid all appearance of display. Probably Peter did not know at first what the result would be. **Kneeled down, and prayed,** to learn the Lord's will, and to receive his power. **Tabitha, arise.** If he used the Aramaic, the common language, the expression would be *Tabitha cumi*, differing but one letter from the *Talitha cumi* of Mark 5: 41, which he heard the Master speak in the sick chamber at Capernaum. **And she opened her eyes,** as one awaking from sleep. **She sat up,** showing that she was really alive again.

41. Gave her his hand, to help her up *after* she was alive. Jesus took Jairus' daughter's hand *before* she was restored.

42. And it was (became) **known . . . and many believed in the Lord.** The good works which the disciples did, on the one hand, and the power of the Lord to heal and save, on the other, both commended the gospel to the people, and made it known everywhere.

43. Tarried many days. Peter struck while the iron was hot. The harvest was ripe, it was great, the laborers were few. **Joppa** was a large city, a busy seaport, and hence an excellent center from which to send forth the knowledge of the gospel. **With one Simon a tanner,** whose house was by the seaside (Acts 10: 6). "An order was issued not long ago, by the Sultan, for removing the old walls and dismantling the fortifications of Jaffa. In cutting a gate through a water battery at an angle of the sea wall built by Titus Vespasian, and directly in front of the reputed 'house of one Simon a tanner,' they came upon three oval-shaped *tanners' vats* hewn out of the natural rock, and lined with Roman cement, down very near the sea, and similar in every respect to those in use eighteen centuries ago." — *H. L. Hastings, 1890.*

Why Peter dwelt with Simon the tanner we do not know. The business was extremely obnoxious to the Jews as unclean, because it required contact with dead animals. A wife could claim a divorce, if it is said, if the husband was a tanner, and had kept the fact secret before marriage. See Edersheim's *Jewish Social Life*, p. 158. We can suggest several reasons.

1. Peter was welcome there.
2. He went where he was most needed.
3. He showed that Jesus was no respecter of persons.
4. He himself was becoming prepared for his experiences with Cornelius in the next chapter, and bursting the bonds of Jewish narrowness.

THE RESTORATION OF DORCAS. 1. It brought into prominence Christian care for the poor.

2. It called attention to the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead, and was still alive in heaven, and could do the same wonders through his disciples as he himself had done when on earth. It was no dead Saviour, but a living Saviour, whom the apostles preached.

3. It revealed more clearly the character of Jesus, reminding the people of his teachings and his works of mercy and love.

4. It was a lesson on immortality, teaching that the soul has an existence separate from the body; and that eternal life, begun here, and continuing forever, is the life that should be most earnestly sought.

5. Her life and deeds of charity were an imperishable monument, more enduring than monuments of bronze or stone.

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6. Was it worth while to be restored? What was the effect on her character, on her view of the world and its interests when

"Heaven opened to a soul while yet on earth"? — *Browning.*

"The man who once has looked
Behind the veil which severs death from life,
He would not venture all the world to win
One single thought against the eternal law."

COMPARE the effect upon Lazarus as represented in Browning's "Epistle," in Professor Plumptre's poem "Lazarus," in Tennyson's "In Memoriam," XXXI., and in the case of the well-known trance of the New Jersey minister, Dr. Tennent. Rev. C. M. Sheldon's *Robert Hardy's Seven Days.* Dante's visit to the lower regions. *Suggestive Illustrations* on John, on chap. 11, "The Raising of Lazarus."

LESSON III. — April 20.

PETER AND CORNELIUS. — Acts 10: 34–44.

Study Verses 34–48. Read Acts 10: 1–48.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***God is no respecter of persons.*** — ACTS 10: 34.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Starting Points. — The scholars should read the whole story (Acts 10: 1–11: 18).

The map will be an aid in this lesson.

Character sketches of Cornelius and Peter.

The problem, which divine providence was solving, the reception of the Gentiles into the Christian church on the same terms as the Jews.

On the Way. — Note the methods of the divine providence: —

1. The natural character of Peter.
2. His training and broadening.
3. The spiritual development of Cornelius.
4. The way Cornelius and Peter were brought together.
5. The silent preparation of Paul to carry on the work thus begun.

The goal is seen: 1. In the conversion of the Roman soldier.

2. In the endorsement by the Holy Spirit.

3. In the action of the church in our next lesson.

Compare the different reports of the visions (Acts 10 and 11).

PICTURES.

Christ giving the Keys to St. Peter, Perugino (Florence); *St. Peter in the House of Cornelius*, Doré (London).

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 34, 35; Eph. 2: 19–22.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. A. D. 38–40. Not long after our last lesson. During the "many days" while Peter was preaching at Joppa, after the raising of Dorcas.

Place. Peter was at Joppa, in the house of Simon the tanner. Cornelius was at Cesarea, the Roman capital of Judea, about thirty-three miles to the north.

PLACE IN THE HISTORY.

One of the later preparatory steps in the transition period, from a church of Jews to a universal church for all nations and races. During also the preparatory period of Paul for his great work.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

Bartlet's *Apostolic Age*, pp. 41–46; McGiffert, pp. 101–107; Dr. Wm. M. Taylor's *Peter the Apostle*; Farrar's *Texts Explained*, pp. 140–143, on "Respecter of Persons"; Farrar's *Life and Work of St. Paul*, vol.

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LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: The Way an Earnest Seeker found Christ.

I. CORNELIUS. A CHARACTER SKETCH.
Family, position, character, difficulties. Preparations. Vision.

II. PETER. ON THE WAY TO LARGER TRUTHS AND GREATER USEFULNESS.

III. PETER TAUGHT BY A VISION.
The vision. The need of the vision.

IV. THE MEETING AT CORNELIUS' HOUSE.
Who were present.

V. THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PETER (vs. 34-43).
God no respecter of persons.
The gospel according to Jesus Christ, its effects and proofs.

VI. THE WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (vs. 44-46).
As on Pentecost.

VII. ROMAN CITIZENS CONFESS CHRIST IN BAPTISM (vs. 47, 48).
Practical suggestions.

I., p. 276, for the forcible statement of the perplexing problem then before the church; Horace Bushnell's *Living Subjects*, "Outside Saints"; Keble's *Christian Year*; Susan Coolidge's *Poems*, "The Vision and the Summons." Dawson's *Modern Science in Bible Lands* gives a picture and description of one of the Cornelian family found in Pompeii, and a cast of him is now in the Pompeian Museum. On the Italian band, see Bartlet, note on p. 42; Ramsay's *Paul the Traveler*, p. 260, etc.; Josephus, XX., 2, 4.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

These can be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

Cornelius.
How Peter was prepared for the new departure.
Visions and their value.
Meaning of Peter's vision.
The gospel according to Peter.
The witness of the Holy Spirit.
Confessing Christ. Effect of this on the church.

I. Cornelius. A Character Sketch. FAMILY. Cornelius was a member of an ancient and distinguished Italian family, the Cornelian gens, or family, of which the famous Roman generals, the Scipios and Sulla, were members.

POSITION. He was a Roman centurion, that is, captain of a company of one hundred men, the Italian band, probably volunteers from Italy. "These cohorts," says Tristram, "being volunteers, and raised for special foreign service, ranked above the ordinary legionary, and were rarely moved from their own headquarters. But in no case were the imperial troops ordinarily moved about in time of peace. No troops served in their own country. Britain was garrisoned by Syrians; the forces of the Arabian frontier were recruited in Asia."

For discussion of questions concerning the Italian band, see Knowling and Ramsay's *Was Christ born in Bethlehem?* pp. 260-269. An epitaph of a young Roman soldier of an Italian company has recently been discovered at Carnuntum.

Cornelius, with his troops, were the guardians of Cesarea, the Roman capital and one of the seaports of Judea. It was a large and flourishing city at the time of this lesson, built by Herod the Great, and named from Cæsar Augustus.

EARLY LIFE. We know nothing of this, except that he must have been brought up in heathenism, with all its cruelties and unsatisfactory worship, which left his heart hungry, like the prodigal feeding on husks.

CHARACTER. A man in the position of Cornelius had abundant opportunities of becoming acquainted with the Jewish religion, their one true God, and the loftiness of their code of morals. Cornelius, like the Roman centurion at Capernaum, received the truth, and worshiped God in spirit and in truth, but did not become a Jewish proselyte, accepting all their ritual and forms of worship. He was (1) a devoutly religious man; (2) worshiping the one true God, and in the best way he knew, fasting and adopting the Jewish hours of prayer. (3) He was openly religious, his whole household going with him, and his kinsmen and intimate friends feeling his influence (v. 24). (4) He expressed his piety in almsgiving, helping his fellowmen. (5) He was honest and upright in his dealings (v. 22). (6) Doubtless, like the most devout Jews, he was looking and longing for better things, for fuller truth, for higher life. He felt like Goethe whose dying cry was "More light"; and added the deeper cry, "More love." What he prayed for with the earnestness of fasting can be seen by the sequel, for the answer to the prayer shows what the heart of the prayer was. (1) He wanted more and clearer light. (2) He wanted assurance of forgiveness of sins. (3) He wanted the fulness and freedom of holy living, which no alms, no good deeds alone, can work within us. (4) He wanted many

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doubts and difficulties solved. (5) He wanted to be closer to God, with a consciousness of his love and presence and care. (6) He wanted to know more about the life to come. Cornelius gained these only by overcoming many and very great obstacles, — his early training, his heathen friends and associates, the immoralities encouraged by a military life, especially at that time, the danger of losing his promotion, the worldliness of his surroundings. The sea captain sails for his port whichever way the winds blow or the currents run. The true soul steers, not drifts.

TO HIM THAT HATH SHALL BE GIVEN. All this made it possible for God to give to Cornelius still higher blessings. Only to him that hath can more be given. No one can see the vision from the mountain top unless he has climbed the mountain's side. It is the faithful scholar in the lower schools who is called to come up higher, and can make use of the higher. To him that uses the talents well shall be entrusted whole cities.

THE VISION. In answer to his prayer, and the memorial of his love expressed in acts of kindness and love, there stood by him in a vision, one day at the three o'clock hour of prayer, an angel in the form of a man in shining raiment, who bade him send to Joppa and ask Peter to come to him. This was the way to the light, and a test of Cornelius' faith.

II. Peter. On the Way to Larger Truths and Greater Usefulness. Peter, of all the twelve apostles, was the one best prepared by his natural character to receive the vision and act upon it. He had "the impulsive and uncalculating spirit," to which "such a request as that of Cornelius would appeal most strongly, and he was just the man who would accept most unquestioningly the divine evidence of his conversion, and be quickest to act upon that evidence and receive the new convert as a Christian brother." — *McGiffert.* He would do what he knew to be right without regard to consequences, perhaps without seeing them.

Moreover Peter was one of the most influential of the apostles, and what he did would have more weight with the church than the same act done by most of the others.

Peter's labors among the converts in the districts outside of Jerusalem were gradually preparing him for the great and difficult problem of the reception of the Gentiles, which the church had to solve.

III. Peter taught by a Vision. Cornelius sent two trusty and sympathetic men of his household, with a soldier attendant, to Joppa. If they left Cesarea the same afternoon as Cornelius' vision, they could easily reach Joppa by noon of the next day. As they drew near the city, Peter, unconscious of their approach or mission, went as usual to the cool retirement of the house-top for his midday season of prayer.

During this season of devotion Peter fell into a trance, the form of the vision being shaped by his hunger. He saw the heavens opened to reveal to him spiritual things, and from it came down "an extended sheet, the four corners of which were held up, as it were, by cords let down from the four extremities of the opened sky. The significance of the outstretched sheet, as a figure of the wide world, and the four corners as the directions into which the gospel was now to be borne forth into all the world, has often been dwelt upon." — *Cambridge Bible.* This sheet was filled with all kinds of animals, domestic and wild, clean and unclean, together, and creeping things, which are unclean to the Jews.

Peter was hungry, and he was invited to kill and eat. But he refused to satisfy his hunger by breaking the law of God. But the voice replied, "What *God* hath cleansed call not *thou* common." God, who had made the former law for a wise purpose, now declared that its work was done, its obligation was removed, as the rules for a boy may not apply to a man, as the staging necessary in building a house must be taken away when the house is done.

The vision was thrice repeated, both to emphasize the truth as of the utmost importance, and to assure Peter beyond doubt that the message was from God. It was confirmed by the coming of the messengers, and the voice of the Spirit bidding him "Go with them, nothing doubting; for I have sent them."

THE NEED OF THE VISION. 1. It was necessary that there should be a broadening of the church from a Jewish to a universal church, including Gentiles as well as Jews. How it could be done was to be the burning question of the day, and one which threatened to rend the church in twain as by an earthquake shock.

2. Cornelius, a Gentile, was knocking at the door.

3. But the Jews were separated from the Gentiles by a divine law, which hindered intercourse by forbidding to the Jews some articles of food in common use among the Gentiles, and forbidding the Gentiles to enter into the most sacred places of the Jewish worship. The Jewish interpretations were stricter than the law itself.

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34. Then / And Pē'ter opened his / his mouth, and said, [1] Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

[1] Deut. 10: 17; Rom. 2: 11; Gal. 2: 6; Eph. 6: 9.



From a Photograph by Benfils.

House of Simon the Tanner (Joppa).

4. The Gentiles, as Gentiles, could therefore be received into the same church with the Jews, only by the same divine authority that had ordained the law.

5. This authority was given (1) through the vision to Peter; (2) through the Spirit bidding him to go to Cornelius; (3) through new and larger views; and (4) through the endorsement by God by the same visible gift of the Holy Spirit upon the Gentile converts as he had bestowed upon the first disciples.

6. The meaning is not that "all forms of humanity, though debased in ignorance and vice," are clean, but that all of them whom God hath cleansed are clean, and are to be received into the new kingdom on equal terms with the Jews, without their becoming Jews. We should "see in every human being a soul for which Christ has poured out his cleansing blood," and do our utmost that he may receive the divine cleansing. And when he is cleansed, he is our brother, be he native or foreigner, black or white, ignorant or educated, from the slums or from a palace.

IV. **The Meeting at Cornelius' House in Cesarea.** Peter was still in perplexity, when the three men from Cornelius reached the house of Simon the tanner, and inquired for him. The Spirit bade him go with them. The next day Peter, with six leading disciples of Joppa (Acts 11: 12), accompanied the three messengers to Cesarea. They reached Cornelius' house on the fourth day, at three o'clock, and found the Roman centurion with his relatives and friends assembled and waiting. The centurion welcomed Peter, and Peter inquired why he had been sent for. V. 29 is a good text for a minister who is called to a parish, or a teacher who is asked to take a class. Cornelius tells why he sent for Peter, and asks him to speak.

V. **The Gospel according to Peter.** — Vs. 34-43. 34. **Of a truth I perceive.** He had a clearer view and firmer grasp of the truth, confirmed by what had just taken place. The Greek for *perceive*, "here as in Eph. 3: 18, denotes a grasp of spiritual truth gained by personal experience." — *Rendall.*

1. THE GOSPEL IS FOR ALL MEN. **God is no respecter of persons.** προσωπολήμπτης, from πρόσωπον, *the face, the front part of the human head*, and hence, secondarily, as here, *a mask, something before the face*, the appearance one presents to others through outward circumstances such as wealth, rank, dress, and λαμβάνω, *to receive, to accept.* Hence, to receive or treat any person, not according to what they are, but according to their outward circumstances, such as wealth or social position, nationality, color. (1) All men alike need salvation. (2) God loves all men and wants all to be saved. (3) There is one and the same condition of salvation for all. (4) Those who honestly and earnestly seek shall certainly find.

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35. But [1] in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

36. The word which [2] sent unto the children of Is'ra-el, preaching peace by Jē'sus Christ: ([3] he is Lord of all:)

37. That word, ye know, which was published throughout all Jū-dæ'a, and began from Găl'ĭ-lee, after the baptism which John preached;

38. How God anointed Jē'sus of Năz'a-rĕth with the Hō'ly Ghōst and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; [6] for God was with him.

39. And [7] we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Je-ru'sa-lĕm; [8] whom they slew and hanged on a tree:

40. Him [9] God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly;

41. [10] not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, *even* to us, [11] who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

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[1] Acts 15: 9; Rom. 2: 13; 1 Cor. 12: 13; Gal. 3: 28; Eph. 2: 13.
[2] Isa. 57: 19; Eph. 2: 14; Col. 1: 20.
[3] Matt. 28: 18; Rom. 10: 12.
[4] Luke 4: 14.
[5] Luke 4: 18; Acts 2: 22.
[6] John 3: 2.
[7] Acts 2: 32.
[8] Acts 5: 30.
[9] Acts 2: 24.
[10] John 14: 17; Acts 13: 31.
[11] Luke 24: 30, 43; John 21: 13.

35. **But in every nation**, Jew or Gentile. **He that feareth him, and worketh righteousness.** These two particulars include the observation of both tables of the law. **Is accepted with him.** If the things done were good in themselves, they were equally good, whoever did them. "Peter shows a belief that there were some men who feared God, and worked righteousness among non-Jewish races and nations, who were accepted of God." — *President Woolsey.* God's only test is what a person really is in moral character. All must be saved in the same way, on the same conditions, subject to the same penalties if they refuse, and open to the same blessings if they repent and believe.

2. THE GOSPEL CAME BY JESUS CHRIST. **36. The word** (the message) . . . **unto the children of Israel**, who first received it, and who had been prepared for it by a long training. **Preaching.** Greek, *evangelising, preaching* the good tidings of **peace**, *i. e.*, salvation. (1) Peace with God; (2) peace from the condemnation of conscience; (3) peace among men, who now become brothers; (4) peace in the soul, whose powers are now all in harmony under one supreme Lord. **By Jesus Christ.** The divine Saviour. **He is Lord of all.** Jew and Gentile. Not a mere prophet, but the Lord himself.

37. That word (tidings, not the same Greek that is rendered *word* in v. 36) . . . **ye know.** This implies that they had already some knowledge of the life and works of Christ. The works of Christ were so public and so wide-spread that some knowledge of them must have come to the ears of Cornelius,

3. THE EFFECTS OF THE GOSPEL WERE WORTHY OF THE SON OF GOD. **38. God anointed.** Set him apart for this special purpose, as kings and priests were set apart for their work by anointing with oil. Jesus was anointed **with the Holy Ghost and with power.** These were the true anointing, and proof that he was sent from God. There was no self-seeking, but only service of others, **doing good**, the most good, and good only. **Oppressed of the devil.** Demoniacs. His triumph over this form of Satanic agency is singled out as the highest exhibition of his wonder-working power. But many forms of evil are in some way oppressions of the devil, especially ignorance and moral evil.

4. THE PROOFS WERE INFALLIBLE AND ABUNDANT. **39. We are witnesses.** Peter spoke what he knew to be true. He had been with Jesus and seen all these things.

40. Him God raised up. Not only were the apostles witnesses, but God himself bore witness by raising Jesus from the dead. The Jews imagined that they had destroyed Jesus by crucifying, but this only gave God an opportunity to prove more conclusively that Jesus was his messenger, and his Son.

41. Not to all the people. For that would have impressed them that he had never been really dead, and would have hindered the training of the disciples into a full conception of his continued life in heaven. "Theophylact well remarks, 'If even the disciples were incredulous, and needed touch and talk, what would have happened in the case of the many.'" — *Knowling.* **Chosen before,** προκεχειροτονημένοις, from πρό, *before*, and

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42. And [1] he commanded (charged) us to preach unto the people, and to testify [2] that it (this) is he which was (is) ordained of God *to be* the Judge [3] of quick and dead.

43. [4] To him give (bear) all the prophets witness, that through his name [5] whosoever (every one that) believeth in (on) him shall receive remission of sins.

44. While Pē'ter yet spake these words, [6] the Hō'ly Ghōst fell on all them which heard the word.

45. [7] And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, (amazed,) as many as came with Pē'ter, [8] because that on the Gĕn'tiles also was poured out the gift of the Hō'ly Ghōst.

46. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Pē'ter,

47. Can any man forbid (the) water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Hō'ly Ghōst [9] as well as we?

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[1] Matt. 28: 19; Acts 1: 8.
[2] John 5: 22; Acts 17: 31.
[3] Rom. 14: 9; 2 Cor. 5: 10.
[4] Isa. 53: 11; Jer. 31: 34; Acts 26: 22.
[5] Acts 15: 9; Rom. 10: 11.
[6] Acts 4: 31; 8: 15, 16, 17.
[7] V. 23.
[8] Acts 11: 18; Gal. 3: 14.
[9] Acts 11: 17; 15: 8, 9; Rom. 10: 12.

χειροτονέω, *to stretch out the hand* for the purpose of giving a vote; hence, *to appoint, elect, ordain.* "Plato uses the word of the election of leaders of choruses. *Laws*, 765."

42. He commanded us. Peter now shows Cornelius his commission from Christ, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." **And to testify.** Bear witness to what they had seen and heard and experienced. The best part of all true preaching of Christ is simply *bearing witness*. The preacher proclaims the truth, and then witnesses to it from his own experience. **Judge of quick** (living) **and dead.** Christ *is now* the judge; his life and character are the standard by which every man is to judge himself; he shows what is the ideal of humanity, and so, how far we have fallen from it. He is also to be the judge, by announcing the divine judgments on the sons of men at the last day.

5. THE PROMISE TO ALL WHO BELIEVE. **43. To him give all the prophets witness.** The prophets as a body bore witness to Jesus. From the very beginning prophets have foretold the Messiah, and ceremonials have set forth his mission. Both have pictured him before the people. And Jesus is the one pictured in every particular. Jesus was not isolated. His coming was not a sudden, unintended movement, but the fruitage and consummation of a plan unfolding through the ages. **Remission of sins.** The sending away, release as from debt, or penalty. This is man's first need. The debt is too great for him to pay, the burden too heavy to carry, the penalty too great to bear. His sins, unforgiven, keep him from his Father, and his Father's home. "This is God's first message to man, — Forgiveness free and ample; sure and immediate."

VI. **The Witness of the Holy Spirit.** — Vs. 44-46. **44. The Holy Ghost fell on all them.** The Jews from Joppa and the Gentiles of Cesarea. This was the testimony of the Holy Spirit that God treated Jews and Gentiles alike, and that, therefore, the Christians should so treat them. They all spoke with tongues, and it is probable that there was the same visible manifestation of flaming tongues as on the day of Pentecost; for Peter in his report to the disciples at Jerusalem (Acts 11: 15) says that the Holy Ghost fell on them "as on us at the beginning." This was the proof of Peter's saying at the opening of his address (v. 34).

This gift had the same symbolic meaning as on the day of Pentecost; the symbol of the tongue, the symbol of the flame; the gospel for all nations and races, the unity of the church, the new power from heaven, the new life. See Lesson II. of the First Quarter.

TESTIMONY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. The Holy Spirit has given his testimony and endorsement of missions by his marvelous works of conversion. Almost every great missionary denomination of Christians has had at least one among its missions, where the Holy Spirit has wrought wonders of transformation. And almost every denomination of Christians, from the most ritualistic to the Salvation Army, of almost every form of belief that makes Christ their Master and Saviour, has been endorsed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

VII. **Roman Citizens confess Christ in Baptism.** — Vs. 47, 48. **47. Can any man forbid water** for the outward ceremony of baptism, since God had baptized

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48. [1] And he commanded them to be baptized [2] in the name of the Lord. Jesus Christ. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

[1] 1 Cor. 1: 17. [2] Acts 2: 38; 8: 16.

them with the Holy Spirit? The question answered itself. No one present could object.

48. Commanded them to be baptized, as the public profession of their faith in Jesus.

BAPTISM was the method by which this purifying change was confessed. Public confession confirms the resolve, burns the ships behind us, helps to undo the evil example of the past, is an aid to others to change their lives, is one proof that the repentance is real. Dr. Geikie says, "Ablution in the East is, indeed, of itself, almost a religious duty. The dust and heat weigh upon the spirits and heart like a load; its removal is refreshment and happiness. It was, hence, impossible to see a convert go down into a stream, travel worn and soiled with dust, and in a moment emerge pure and fresh, without feeling that the symbol suited and interpreted a strong craving of the human heart."

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS. 1. Let us mark again the movements of divine providence, which are as perfect and fitting in our lives as in those of Peter and Cornelius.

"The saint beside the ocean prayed,
The soldier in his chosen bower."

"To each unknown his brother's prayer,
Yet brethren true in dearest love
Were they."

So says Keble; and the prayers came together to produce one result.

ILLUSTRATION. Some one has compared the movements of providence to that of pieces on a chess-board, which, however moved, in whatever part of the board, in whichever direction, all bear upon one purpose, however unrecognized that purpose may be by those who look on.

2. Visions often have a far-reaching and powerful influence, especially visions like Peter's, like Isaiah's, and the prophet's, which show out of the midst of confusion and imperfections what ought to be and what can be.

COMPARE *The Trance of William Tennent, The Sister's Dream of Heaven, The Vision of Philip Doddridge*, all once published in tract form; and the most notable vision lately published in *How Christ Came to Church*, in which some twenty years ago a dream came to Dr. A. J. Gordon, well known in Boston by multitudes — a dream which changed his whole after life and ministry. See *Suggestive Illustration on Acts* (under 1: 11).

3. Like Peter we must come down from our visions to daily duties, as the disciples came down from the Mount of Transfiguration.

"Is there no knocking heard below,
For which you should arise and go,
Leaving the vision, and again
Bearing its message unto men?

"Though pure and bright thy higher air,
And hot the street and dull the stair,
Still get thee down, for who shall know,
But 'tis the Lord who knocks below."
— *Susan Coolidge.*

COMPARE Longfellow's "Legend Beautiful" in the *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, —

"When the blessed Vision said,
'Hadst thou stayed, I must have fled.'"

4. Note how both Peter and Cornelius were prepared for the new light that flashed upon them, as the plant is long preparing for the blossoms of spring, as the inventor is long preparing for the great invention which at length crowns his labors.

5. A man can be good under any circumstances. The position of Cornelius was not a favorable one for the development of the religious life. His early training, his surroundings, his business, his opportunities for unjust gains, his associates, his chances of preferment, were all against him. And yet he rose superior to all his difficulties.

6. The change wrought by Jesus in Cornelius, though he was a good, devout man before, was very great. He had a new revelation of God's will, he had assurance where before he had longings and hope. He had new life, new love, a new master, a new power.

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LESSON IV. — April 27.

GENTILES RECEIVED INTO THE CHURCH.

Acts 11 : 4–15.

Study Verses 1–18.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***Whosoever believeth on him shall receive remission of sins.*** — ACTS 10: 43.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

In our last lesson we were considering the reception of the Gentiles rather from the standpoint of individuals. To-day we look at it from the standpoint of the church, and its development and growth.

This point of view is rather difficult for small children. But there are subjects of interest even for them. The review of Peter's vision can be made helpful and interesting. So can the Pentecostal picture, and God no respecter of persons, and the joy over those who have repented unto life.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. The same as the last lesson so far as Peter's review is concerned.

Place. But the trial of Peter followed not long after, at Jerusalem, about A. D. 39, 40.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

These can be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

Criticism of others from a false view of the facts.
What Peter had done.
What was the question between Jews and Gentiles.
Why was there so much feeling on this point.
What is necessary to salvation.
Why the church rejoiced.

LEARN BY HEART.

V. 9; Jas. 2: 1, 9; Luke 15: 7.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: God's Wide Welcome to all the World.

I. PETER RETURNS TO JERUSALEM (vs. 1, 2).

Criticism from a false view of facts.

II. PETER CRITICIZED BY THE STRICTER JEWS (vs. 2, 3).

The question at issue.
Why the discussion was so intense.

III. PETER'S ANSWER TO THEIR CRITICISMS (vs. 4–17).

A summary of his answers.
Notes upon his action.

IV. THE CHURCH ACQUITS PETER AND REJOICES IN THE SALVATION OF THE GENTILES (v. 18).

V. PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

Same as in Lesson III.

1. And Now the apostles and the brethren that were in Jū-dæ'a heard that the Gĕn'tiles had also also had received the word of God.

2. And when Pē'ter was come up to Je-ru'sa-lĕm,[1] they that were of the circumcision contended with him,

[1] Acts 10: 45; Gal. 2: 12.

I. **Peter returns to Jerusalem.** — Vs. 1, 2. 1. **The apostles and brethren that were in,** rather, throughout (κατὰ), **Judæa heard.** The news of such an event in the capital would rapidly spread throughout the church, all the more rapidly because it was a strange event, contrary to the common strongly held beliefs, and such as to awaken a great deal of very earnest, if not bitter, discussion.

2. **Peter was come up to Jerusalem.** He came with six leading Christians of Joppa, who had witnessed the scenes at Cesarea (Acts 11: 12). This taking of the wit-

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3. Saying, saying, [1] Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, [2] and didst eat with them.

4. But Pē'ter rehearsed *the matter from the beginning,* began, and expounded *it* by order *the matter* unto them in order, saying,

5. [4] I was in the city of Jŏp'pa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, descending, as it had been were a great sheet let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to unto me:

6. Upon upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw the fourfooted beasts of the earth and wild beasts and creeping things and fowls of the air. heaven.

7. And I heard also a voice saying unto me, Arise, Rise, Pē'ter; slay kill and eat.

[1] Acts 10: 28.
[2] Gal. 2: 12.
[3] Luke 1: 3.
[4] Acts 10: 9, etc.

nesses with him implies that Peter went to Jerusalem at least in part to defend his course, and to correct misapprehensions which were certain to arise from exaggerated reports and the distortions of prejudice.

"Rumor is a pipe
Blown by surmises, jealousies, conjectures;
And of so easy and so plain a stop,
That the blunt monster with uncounted heads,
The still discordant, wavering Multitude,
Can play upon it."
— *Henry IV., part II., Induction.*

"Rumor doth double, like the voice and echo,
The numbers of the feared."
— *Henry IV., part II., 3: 1.*

CRITICISM FROM A FALSE VIEW OF FACTS. I once received a very polite letter denying the correctness of a fact quoted in my SELECT NOTES to the effect that the coat of a British soldier seen through a red glass appeared white. A class of young men tried the experiment, and it was not true. The only reason was that they did not try it according to the conditions. I went to a manufacturer of stained glass, and found that when looking through the ruby-red glass, ordinary red objects still appeared red. But when we looked at the lighter scarlet, the royal red of England, the color of the soldier's coat, then it did appear white, as had been stated.

II. **Peter criticized by the Stricter Jews.** — Vs. 2, 3. **They that were of the circumcision.** That is, "the champions of the circumcision," the stricter Jewish Christians, who were "not simply Jews, but had a strong and deep feeling regarding the necessity of circumcision. With the exception of the recent converts, none except Jews were members of the church of Christ. This expression, however, is one that it would be natural for St. Luke, writing some years afterwards, to use. And indeed now, for the first time, there were within the church the two strongly contrasted elements of Jewish and Gentile Christianity. We are exactly at the turn where the history of the Christian church passes into its new phase." — *Schaff.* See Ramsay's *Paul*, p. 44. **Contended with him.** The same word is used of Michael the Archangel contending with the devil (Jude 9). It is difficult to "understand the vehemence and intensity of the battle which the most enlightened apostles had to wage against the Judaic Christians." "Their central belief was that God *was* 'a respecter of persons,' and *was* full of partiality for special favorites. The Pharisee drew back the hem of his garment if he chanced to pass a Gentile or a publican or one of 'the masses.' The God of the Talmudists reminds us of Pope's lines: —

"'In quibbles angels and archangels join,
And God the Father turns a School Divine.'"

"This whole system of uncompassionate arrogance St. Peter sweeps away in a single sentence." "Without the fullest enlightenment and the most heroic courage it would have been impossible to rescue Christianity from that strangling yoke of Pharisaism which would inevitably have degraded it to the rank of a paltry and evanescent sect." — *Farrar.*

THE QUESTION AT ISSUE. This involved two points: (1) the eating with Gentiles (v. 3), of which Peter is here accused; and (2) the receiving of the Gentiles into the church without their first becoming Jews. McGiffert says that "in Acts 11: 3 the disciples

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8. But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath (at any time ever) entered into my mouth.

9. But (the a) voice answered (me again from the second time out of) heaven, What God hath cleansed, (that call make) not thou common.

10. And this was done (three times: thrice:) and all were drawn up again into heaven.

11. And behold, (immediately there were forthwith) three men (already come unto stood before) the house (where I was, in which we were, having been) sent from Cæs-a-rē'a unto me.



Reclining at Meat.

of Jerusalem are represented as contending with Peter because he had gone in to men uncircumcised and had eaten with them; but it is a striking fact that, in the address which follows, Peter does not defend himself against that charge, but against the charge of recognizing a Gentile as a Christian disciple, and admitting him to baptism, which is an entirely different matter." "Luke evidently did not recognize the difference between the two steps." But Luke's business was to report the facts; and the fact that Peter answered one complaint by a reference to another shows that he, and Luke with him, recognized the fact that the two acts were so intertwined that the answer to the last charge implied of necessity an answer to the first. For if Gentiles were acknowledged as disciples and admitted to the church without becoming proselytes, then Jews must eat with them at least in the Lord's Supper. So that Peter, answering the charge of admitting Gentiles to the church, answered at the same time the charge of eating with Gentiles.

WHY THE DISCUSSION WAS SO INTENSE. The Jewish Christians desired the Gentiles to become disciples, but thought the only divine way was through their becoming Jews as well as Christians. They were divinely set apart from heathen by the distinction of unclean and clean in food and social customs.

All the promises of the Messiah, of the redemption of the world, of the enlargement of the kingdom of God, were made to the Jews. The forces of the Gentiles were to come to them; "The sons of the strangers shall build up thy walls"; "The nation and the kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish" (Isa. 60). The Jews were God's chosen people, their religion was divine and true. To ignore this, to receive men into the kingdom in another way than commanded to proselytes by God himself, and practised for ages, was not this an insult to God, to religion, to the Bible, to all their past history for eighteen hundred years? Says Farrar, "Those who supported the cause of Paul rendered themselves liable to those charges, so terrible to a Jew, of laxness, of irreligion, of apostasy, of unpatriotism, of not being believers in revealed truth." Peter's action was to them contrary to God, destroying the very foundations of religion, blotting out the promises, blasting their most precious hopes. Nothing but a new divine command could reverse the divine commands of the past. But Jesus himself, the Son of God, the latest revelation from God, was a Jew, who kept the Jewish law, preached to the Jews, declared that not a jot or tittle of the law should fail till all was fulfilled.

III. **Peter's Answer to their Criticisms.** — Vs. 4–17. The story in these verses is a repetition of last Sunday's lesson, so that we need not take up the separate verses, but merely give a summary of his argument.

1. God himself, the God of the Jews, directed Peter plainly to do what he did.

2. He did this, first, by a vivid illustration while Peter was in a trance.

3. His own voice bade him go to Cornelius, who also had been directed by God's shining angel to send for Peter.

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12. And [1] the spirit Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover making no distinction. And [2] these six brethren also accompanied me; and we entered into the man's house:

13. [3] And and he shewed told us how he had seen an the angel standing in his house, which stood and said unto him, and saying, Send men to Jŏp'pa, and call for fetch Sī'mon, whose surname is Pē'ter;

14. Who who shall tell speak unto thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. shalt be saved, thou and all thy house.

15. And as I began to speak, the Hō'ly Ghōst fell on them, even [4] as on us at the beginning.

16. Then remembered I And I remembered the word of the Lord, how that he said, [5] Jŏhn indeed baptized with water; but [6] ye shall be baptized with the Hō'ly Ghōst.

17. [7] Forasmuch If then as God gave unto them the like gift as *he did* also unto us, who when we believed on the Lord Jē'sus Chrīst; [8] what who was I, that I could withstand God?

18. When And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, [9] Then hath God also to the Gen'tiles to the Gen'tiles also hath God granted repentance unto life.

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[1] John 16: 13; Acts 10: 19.
[2] Acts 10: 23.
[3] Acts 10: 30.
[4] Acts 2: 4.
[5] Matt. 3: 11; John 1: 26, 33; Acts 1: 5; 19: 4.
[6] Isa. 44: 3.
[7] Acts 15: 8, 9.
[8] Acts 10: 47.
[9] Rom. 10: 12.

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4. God made disciples of these Gentiles without their becoming Jews.

5. He sent the Holy Spirit upon these Gentile disciples exactly as he had sent the Holy Spirit on the Jewish disciples at Pentecost, making no distinction.

6. Here were six witnesses to these facts, besides Peter.

In v. 12, **nothing doubting** should be as in the R. V., "making no distinction."

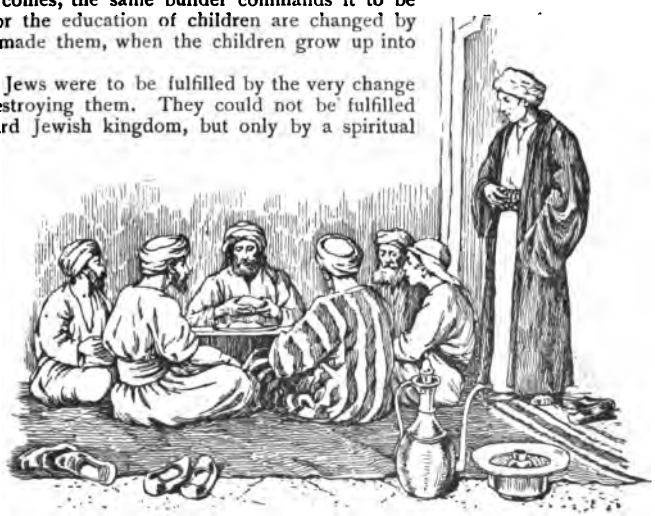
In v. 17, **who believed** belongs both to **them** and to **us**. "In each case the Holy Spirit was bestowed, and in each case as a result of the preceding belief, and not as a result of circumcision or of uncircumcision." — *Knowling*.

NOTE 1. That what Peter did was done by divine direction, and with the divine approval.

2. That this did not contradict what God had ordained before, or show any changeableness in God, but was the natural and necessary result and outcome of his previous commands and ordinances.

ILLUSTRATIONS. A builder commands a scaffold to be put up around the house he is building. When the time comes, the same builder commands it to be taken away. The rules for the education of children are changed by the same authority which made them, when the children grow up into young men and women.

3. The promises to the Jews were to be fulfilled by the very change which they thought was destroying them. They could not be fulfilled in their way by an outward Jewish kingdom, but only by a spiritual kingdom, in which the people inherited the promises by faith, through Jesus Christ. The acorn must burst its shell, and perish as an acorn, or never become an oak. It must take on new forms and rise up into the air and sunlight. The shell was intended to protect the seed till the time came for a further development, and then must be thrown aside. The life of the egg continues in the bird; the life of the caterpillar, in the butterfly.



Sitting at Meat.

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4. In all changes the essential truth and life was preserved, a character and a life fitted for heaven, through believing in Christ.

"O brother man! fold to thy heart thy brother;
Where pity dwells, the peace of God is there;
To worship rightly is to love each other,
Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer."

COMPARE Whittier's *Poems*, "Our Master."

5. The action of Peter was exactly in accordance with the principle laid down in Matt. 9: 14-17, where Jesus teaches that new wine requires new bottles; and in Matt. 5: 17, 18, where he says he came not to destroy, but to fulfil.

"Do what is right,
Right things in great and small,
Then, though the sky should fall,
Sun, moon, and stars, and all,
You shall have light."

IV. **The Church acquits Peter, and rejoices in the Salvation of the Gentiles.** — V. 18. **They held their peace.** They were silenced for a time. There was no answer to Peter's argument from facts, and they ceased from their criticisms. More than this they **glorified God**, for it was a new manifestation of God's glory, his gracious love, his goodness and wisdom and power. So when Moses saw God's glory, it was his goodness that passed before him, and he proclaimed, "I . . . will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy" (Ex. 33: 18, 19).

Long had God shown mercy to Israel, but now the door was thrown wide open to the Gentiles, and God also to them had **granted repentance unto life.** So, like the angels in heaven, the church on earth "rejoiced over one sinner that repented." *Glorified* is in the imperfect tense, denoting continued and repeated action. It is probable that this was not a complete change in Jewish Christian thought, but only an isolated case, under special influences, and many on second thought were unconvinced, for there are traces of the old feeling in the subsequent history, and a few years later the question was decided in relation to Paul's missionary work. The action of the church was an onward movement. The Jews could live as Jews, and yet be Christians; the Gentiles could be Christians and remain Gentiles. It was a movement toward Unity, Liberty, and Peace.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS. 1. These perplexing questions were a part of the discipline and training of the church. They are so still. They keep the church awake and thinking. They keep it out of dulness and deadness. They train it in the virtues of kindly judgment and forbearance. Unrest, change, criticism of the past, are often a sign of fuller life, of springtime, of growth.

There is at present a spirit of unrest and change as to Bible study, as to Sunday schools, as well as in regard to educational methods in colleges and common schools. It is not confined to one thing, but pervades all educational circles. Sometimes Sunday-school workers are troubled on account of the severe criticisms of Sunday-school work by educational experts, but they are still more severe on the work in our common schools. The comfort of it is that it means that we are alive, awake, striving after better things, seeing higher ideals, and on the way to attain them.

2. Progress is slow and difficult, with zigzag motions, with reactions, like the chilly days and snowstorms of spring, but we are moving on toward the summer harvests and winter fruits.

"Heaven is not reached by a single bound,
But we build the ladder by which we rise
From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies,
And we mount to its summit round by round.
We rise by things that are under feet;
By what we have mastered of good and gain;
By the pride deposed and the passion slain;
And the vanquished ills that we hourly meet."

3. There will always be conservative and progressive elements in the church, and both are needed. Only it is necessary that both sides should distinguish between the great underlying principles and the manifold forms in which those principles are expressed. The one essential thing is a devout and holy life, a Christian character, pious deeds, and faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Master. There may be great variations in doctrines, in tastes, in amusements, in forms of worship, and yet the Christian life flourish. Some things are right at one time, but wrong at another. It is said that Yale University once turned out a student for bowling; now they furnish bowling alleys. They were right in both cases. I have read of two sisters in Edinboro who became so estranged that though living in the same house they would not speak to each other. At length they drew a chalk line through the rooms, hall, and doors, and each one kept scrupulously on her own

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side of the line. There is a better way of peace for the church than that. It is to hold to the essential principle of religious life, and keep our own ways, but give abundant liberty to others. This alone can bring unity and peace and progress.

I have just seen the following illustration in the *S. S. Times*. "Smokeless powder is passing over into theological warfare. Christians differ as much as ever, but, with all their differences, they see one another's faces more clearly. And this is a battle where, the clearer we see, the less we slay. Seeing each other, we discover a right-heartedness which compensates for much wrong-headedness."

ILLUSTRATION. 4. The testimony of the Holy Spirit is of the utmost value. That which he indorses and blesses must be good in its essentials. The fruits of the Spirit are the real test, both for ourselves and others.

5. Blessed is the hope and faith that can see the star of Bethlehem through the rifts in the clouds; that

"spies the summer through the winter bud,
She tastes the fruit before the blossom falls,
She hears the lark within the songless egg,
She finds the fountain where they wailed 'Mirage.'"

LESSON V. — May 4.

THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH IN SYRIA.

Acts 11 : 19–30.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***The hand of the Lord was with them : and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.*** — ACTS 11: 21.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Attracting Attention. — Let the scholars, recalling their geography and history, note how all commerce and all events seem to gather around certain centers, so that if any one knows thoroughly certain cities, which radiate influences like rays from the sun, they will know in a large degree the whole civilized world and its history. Note such cities as Rome, Athens, Jerusalem, London, and Paris. Such a center was Jerusalem in the early church.

Now another city, Antioch, becomes the center of the Gentile church, the starting point, and the base of operations for the great foreign missionary labors among the Gentiles.

Review the development of the church up to this time.

Read Isa. 62 as a prophecy, whose larger fulfilment began in these days, and Gal. 2: 1–14, which Ramsay thinks belongs to this second visit of Paul to Jerusalem.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

These can be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

Antioch and its characteristics.
How the church was formed there.
Why it grew so fast.
Barnabas and his work.
Unity of the two churches.
Disciples called Christians.
The famine. The relief fund, and what it did.

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 22–24; Rom. 12: 10, 13; Isa. 62: 1, 2.

PICTURES.

The Apostles preaching the Gospel, Doré; *The Church as a Ship of St. Peter*, Gaddi Taddeo (Florence).

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: A New Church and its Work.

I. THE FIRST GENTILE CHURCH (vs. 19–21).

Antioch and its characteristics.
Formation of the church at Antioch.
Why the church grew.
Its strategic position.

II. THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE CHURCHES (vs. 22–24).

A wise movement.
Fitness of Barnabas.
What he saw, how he felt, what he did.

III. PAUL COMES TO THE ASSISTANCE OF ANTIOCH (vs. 25, 26).

Disciples called Christians.
Great growth of the church.

IV. THE FAMINE AND THE RELIEF FUND (vs. 27–30).

What was done.
Value to the churches.

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HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. The formation of the church at Antioch began some time after the persecution began at the martyrdom of Stephen, and continued to grow. Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch in some part of A. D. 43–46. The famines occurred during 43–48. The one in Palestine A. D. 46 according to Ramsay. Paul and Barnabas visit Jerusalem during this period, perhaps A. D. 46 (Ramsay) or 44 (Lewin).

Place. Antioch, three hundred miles north of Jerusalem. It was the capital of Syria, and one of the three greatest and most luxurious cities in the world at that time. St. Luke was a native of this city.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

There are a number of problems connected with this period which are discussed and decided differently by different writers. See Ramsay's *Was Christ born in Bethlehem?* pp. 118, 251, 252 ($1.75, Putnams); Ramsay's *St. Paul the Traveler*, chap. 3; Gilbert's *Student's Life of Paul*, chap. 6; McGiffert's *Apostolic Age*, pp. 108–112; Bartlet, *The Apostolic Age*, pp. 47–52. Lewin, in his *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, and Farrar, in his *St. Paul*, chap. 16, picture the wickedness of Antioch, and the scenes that met the apostles' eyes here; Lew Wallace's *Ben Hur*, book IV., chaps. 1, 2, 5, 12, and book V., chap. 12, gives a vivid description of Antioch in this age; Professor Stifler on the *Acts*, "Development of a New Religious Center."

I. **The First Gentile Church.** — Vs. 19–21. ANTIOCH was so named by Seleucus Nikator, Alexander's greatest general, who built the city, 300 B. C., in memory of his father Antiochus. It was situated in western Syria on the river Orontes,

The City. sixteen miles from its mouth, as London is situated on the Thames. It was near the northeastern angle of the Mediterranean, and about three hundred miles north of Jerusalem.

It was the capital of Syria at this time, the seaport rival of Damascus on the desert. Gibbon estimates its population at this time at five hundred thousand, making it the third city in the Roman Empire, only Rome and Alexandria being greater.

Population. Three centuries later Chrysostom, the golden-mouthed preacher (a native of Antioch), estimated the population at two hundred thousand, besides children and slaves, and that half the population were Christians.

It was the center of an immense trade in almost all directions. Its ships sailed to every seaport of the Mediterranean. Its roads ran toward Asia Minor, toward

Trade. Egypt, and toward the empires of the East. "It was the emporium of the commerce of the East, at which caravans from Persia and India were continually arriving."

This trade brought in great wealth and luxury. The city abounded in beautiful buildings. "The principal street traversed the entire length of the city from east to west, a distance of about four miles, having four parallel rows of columns, forming a broad road in the middle, open to the sky, and on each side a narrower covered way or portico. The road in the middle was laid with granite in the time of Antoninus Pius."—*Encyclopedia Britannica*. The orator Libanius, a native of Antioch, who lived three hundred years later than St. Paul, boasts of its waterworks, baths, and fountains, and tells us that the streets of the city were lighted at night with public lamps.

Wealth.

The population was cosmopolitan, Jews, Greeks, Syrians, Romans, and all nationalities, races, and languages, freemen and slaves, cultured and ignorant,

Nationalities. wealthy and poverty-stricken, philosophers and debauchees. Wherever there was trade, thither the Jews were attracted, so that at this center of trade there was naturally a large colony of Jews.

"In such a mixed population, while art and literature could gain the praise of Cicero, vice as well as luxury made the city infamous as well as famous." — *Knowling*. "When the Roman satirist Juvenal, writing about this period of which we treat, would fain account for the excessive dissolution of morals which then prevailed at Rome, his explanation of it was that the manners of Antioch had invaded Rome and corrupted its ancient purity." — *Stokes*. Juvenal's words are, "The Orontes flows into the Tiber," expres-

Morals. sing how the vices, quacks, debaucheries, panders, dancing girls, and all the worthless rabble and dregs of dissipation and degradation of Antioch flowed into Rome and corrupted even Rome's corruption. Four or five miles from the city were the famous pleasure grounds of Daphne, known all over the world, where was a temple to Apollo and his colossal statue, "where, under the climate of Syria and the

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19. [1] Now they which. They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the persecution tribulation that arose about Stĕ'phen travelled as far as Phe-ni'ce, Phœ-ni'cia, and Cy'prus, and An'tĭ-ŏch, preaching speaking the word to none but unto the Jews only. save only to Jews.

20. And But there were some of them, were men of Cy'prus and Cy-rē'ne, which, who, when they were come to An'tĭ-ŏch, spake unto [2] the Gre'cians, Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jē'sus.

21. And [3] the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed, and [4] turned unto the Lord.

[1] Acts 8: 1.
[2] Acts 6: 1; 9: 29.
[3] Luke 1: 66; Acts 2: 47.
[4] Acts 9: 35.

wealthy patronage of Rome, all that was beautiful in nature and art had created a sanctuary for a perpetual festival of vice." — *Conybeare and Howson*. Daphne had become proverbial for its luxurious festivals, unbridled debauchery, and unnatural vices. "The temple and village were deeply bosomed in a thick grove of laurels and cypresses, which reached as far as a circumference of ten miles, and proved in the most sultry summers a cool and impenetrable shade. A thousand streams of the purest water, issuing from every hill, preserved the verdure of the earth and the temperature of the air; the senses were gratified with harmonious sounds and aromatic odors; and the peaceful grove was consecrated to health and joy, to luxury and love. The soldier and the philosopher wisely avoided the temptations of this sensual paradise, where pleasure, assuming the character of religion, imperceptibly dissolved the firmness of manly virtue." — *Gibbon*. See Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, chap. 23, 24; Lew Wallace's *Ben Hur*; Renan's *The Apostles*, XII, XIII.

FORMATION OF THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH. **19. Now they which were scattered abroad**, διασπαρέντες, from διά, *thoroughly, everywhere*, and σπείρω, *to scatter seed, to sow*, "derived from the quick, jerky motion of the hand." The thread of the narrative returns to the persecution described in Acts 8: 1–4, in order to show a new line of influence proceeding from that event. The authorities tried to blow out the gospel fire kindled by the Holy Spirit, but it only made it burn the brighter. They lashed the fire, but it only sent the sparks over the world. The wrath of man is made to praise God, and the Christian sings many of his sweetest songs to his enemies' harps, as the psalmist sang the 84th Psalm to the Gittite instrument of music. **As far as Phenice.** Phœnicia, the strip of coast between the Mediterranean and the mountains of Lebanon, extending one hundred and twenty miles from a point a little below Tyre, northward to Beirut, from which, in the autumn of 1895, a railroad was opened to Damascus. **Cyprus**, a large island in the Mediterranean, sixty miles from the Palestine coast. **And Antioch**, the most northern large city on the coast. See above. **Preaching the word to . . . Jews only.** According to the practice and feelings of the Jewish Christians when they left Jerusalem. The new impulses broadening the church had not yet reached them (Acts 1: 8). They began at Jerusalem, but had not yet begun to practise the rest of Christ's command.

20. And, rather "But." Contrasting these with those who confined their labors to the Jews in v. 19. **Men of Cyprus.** The island opposite Tarsus, which Paul had been making the headquarters of his preaching for several years. **And Cyrene.** On the coast of Africa. These were Greek-speaking Jews, who, having lived abroad, were not so intensely Jewish as those who had always lived in Jerusalem, and they had been under the influence of the broad-minded Paul. **Spake unto the Grecians.** The best manuscripts have "Greeks" as in R. V., and this is clearly the correct reading. The New Testament uses *Hellenistæ* (Grecians) to mean those Jews who had been abroad and spoke Greek; but *Hellenes* (Greeks), for Gentiles who did not become Jewish proselytes. The contrast and the new departure lies in the fact that before this the disciples sought to convert to Jesus only the Jews (including the Grecians who were Jews), but now they began to preach to the Gentiles as such.

21. The hand (the symbol of power and of work) **of the Lord.** The head of the church. Thus **a great number believed.** The Lord proved by his power in touching their hearts and renewing their lives that he wanted these people in his church. They were received apparently without contention or opposition, as the logical result of their believing and the divine favor of the plan.

Thus was founded the FIRST GENTILE CHURCH. The broadening of the church for which previous events had been preparing had now actually begun. This church grew to

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22. Then tidings of these things And the report concerning them came unto to the ears of the church which was in Je-ru'sa-lĕm: and they sent forth [1] Bar'na-băs, that he should go as far as An'tĭ-ŏch;

[1] Acts 9: 27.

be a center of religious power and influence next to Jerusalem, and in some respects far greater.

WHY THIS CHURCH GREW. 1. It was founded by strong, earnest, tested, devoted, large-hearted, energetic men, — men who had endured persecution for their Master's sake, who had resisted temptation, who had felt the power of the Holy Spirit. Such founders exert a mighty and enduring influence upon the community they found.

2. The church was planted where it was most needed, and where there were always some who were repelled by the open immorality, and felt a heart-hunger for better and more satisfying things. The community could see the contrast between the earthly and the heavenly paradise, between the fruits that grow upon the upas tree of vice and those that grow upon the tree of life. There is apt to be less enthusiasm in a country where the gospel has so far gained its end that those outside the church have many of the Christian virtues and graces, and the shadow is so pervaded with light that the contrast with the sunshine is small compared with the contrast between midnight and noonday. We see this often in temperance and other reforms.

3. Another reason is found in the strong, energetic, active, wide-awake character of the inhabitants, as shown in their trade, commerce, beauty of the city, and even in their vices. The soil in which thorns and weeds grow most luxuriantly is the very kind of soil in which fruitful vines and trees, when they take the place of these, flourish most abundantly. The great strong engine that has been drawing great trains on the wrong track in the wrong direction can pull just as great trains on the right road in the right direction.

4. The best and strongest Christians often spring up and grow amid the worst corruption. Their very efforts to conquer the evil, and save others from it, strengthen their own character and faith. "It takes live fish to swim up stream."

ILLUSTRATION. "As the coral islands of the Pacific rise and bask in the light of heaven, flowery and fertile, while their base is surrounded by the barren, salt, angry waves of an unfathomable ocean, so the group of Christians that clustered together as a church in Antioch were rich in all the graces of the spirit, although they had sprung from a dreary heathenism, and were surrounded by it still." — *Arnot.*

5. The new development and enlargement was made by individuals, and not officially by the old leaders. It was made as an individual experiment. It is not at all probable that a vote of the church could have been obtained in advance, because they could not see clearly the result. But when the act was done, and the leaders saw that it was not only right, but the right could and would prevail, they favored it. A large part of the progress in the Christian church is still made in this way, and it is doubtless the best way. I know churches where probably the Christian Endeavor movement would have been voted down if proposed at first to the body, but where that movement is probably unanimously commended and loved now. I have no doubt that had the proposal to use unfermented wine been asked officially, it would have been voted down, as it has been in one great denomination, but it has grown to be the almost universal practice in several large denominations. The largest individual liberty, and the smallest official interference, is one of the conditions of greatest progress.

THE STRATEGIC POSITION OF THE ANTIOCH CHURCH is shown clearly from our studies so far. Its situation, its trade, its commerce, its energy, its connection with the sister church at Jerusalem and its distance from it, its cosmopolitan population, its great size, its popularity as a resort for travelers, combined to make it the fitting center of the new departure, and the base for great missionary operations.

II. **The Fellowship of the Churches.** — Vs. 22–24. **22. Then tidings** (the report concerning) **these things came unto . . . Jerusalem.** They were doubtless received with joy mingled with fears as to what the outcome might be. Some would be prepared for the new régime by the conversion of Cornelius and Peter's vision; others would see in it impending disaster, and the ruin of the new religion. Compare the fable of the ugly duckling.

A WISE MOVEMENT. Then the church at Jerusalem did a very wise and right thing: **they sent forth Barnabas** (1) to learn the exact truth about the reports. (2) To prevent any abuses or discord from arising between the Jewish and Gentile converts, of which the

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23. Who, who, when he came, was come, and had seen the grace of God, was glad; and he [1] exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord:

24. For for he was a good man, and [2] full of the Hō'ly Ghōst and of faith: [3] and much people was added unto the Lord.

[1] Acts 13: 43; 14: 22. [2] Acts 6: 5. [3] V. 21; Acts 5: 14.

sequel shows the real danger (Acts 15: 1, 25). The difficult question of eating together could not but arise. (3) To encourage the new disciples in everything that was good. (4) To warn them against error, if error there was. **As far as Antioch.** Implying that he visited other churches on the way.

This wise action of the early church is peculiarly needed in these changing times, when new departures are being made, new forms of truth are being investigated.

THE FITNESS OF BARNABAS FOR THIS MISSION. It would have been difficult to find a man in all the early church more adapted to this mission than was Barnabas. He was a man of unblemished character, of great wisdom, of ripe enthusiasm, and able to kindle enthusiasm. "An apathetic Christian is an anomaly as incongruous in conception as a frozen sunbeam or a petrified flame."

On the one hand, the church at home had perfect confidence in him, in his judgment and his character. He was a Levite, and so would be especially bound to the Jewish religion, so as not to compromise them in any way. He had been very generous, selling some of his property for the benefit of the poor; and even his name, Barnabas, had been given him by the apostles, because he was "a son of consolation," with power to comfort and exhort (Acts 4: 36, 37). He was full of the Holy Spirit.

On the other hand, he was a native of Cyprus, only sixty miles from Antioch, and was familiar with the place and the people. He knew the language. He was a friend and acquaintance of those who had gone here from Jerusalem, some of them also being from Cyprus. And as a Grecian Jew, he would naturally be in sympathy with the new movement, and would be welcomed by the Christians of Antioch of both parties.

WHAT HE SAW. **23. When he came, and had seen the grace of God,** as shown in the converts, their changed character, their numbers, their good deeds. There were doubtless many imperfections in these disciples, but that which shone brightest and was seen first was what the grace of God had wrought in them; as when we look at a black coal or a piece of glass in the sunshine, it is the shining rays that we see first and most.

There is a good lesson for us all in this. Yesterday I heard a sermon by Rev. C. M. Southgate on how Christ dealt with the disagreeable persons and things he met; and one of the ways was his finding the best things in them. We see largely what we are looking for. Who has not looked through a telescope at the sun in order to see the spots. The English traveler hunting for tigers declared that the missionaries had done nothing in India, for he had lived there for years and never seen anything of it. The missionary replied that his logic would prove that there were no tigers in India, for he had lived there twenty years and had never seen one. Ministers are continually surprised at finding many unexpected good deeds and good qualities in persons they have to deal with. Men must see the evil, as Barnabas saw the evil in Antioch, but his gaze was fixed on the grace of God delivering from such evil; just as in a battle for a noble cause, our hearts dwell on the heroism and faith and courage more than on the bloodshed and pain.

HOW HE FELT. **Was glad.** One test of character is what a person rejoices in. There is nothing worthier of great joy than the conversion of men: (1) joy at their deliverance from sin; (2) at their escape from the awful punishment of sin; (3) joy for the great blessings to which they are saved; (4) joy for the good influences they may exert; (5) joy for the new stars in the crown of our Redeemer.

WHAT HE DID. **Exhorted them all,** *παρεκάλει*. The word is the same as that from which the Holy Spirit, *the Comforter*, is named. It means much more than exhort or comfort. He strengthened, encouraged, stimulated them by his gift of eloquence. **That with purpose of heart.** With the will and affections, the whole choice of the soul. **They would cleave unto the Lord.** The only way to stand firm and strong amid the many temptations of life, and to hold on to the end, is by cleaving to the Lord, as the branch to the vine.

24. **For he was a good man.** Not merely honest and upright, but generous, kindly, loving, conciliating. This was shown in his joy that Gentiles were converted as well as

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25. Then departed Bar'na-bas And he went forth to [1] Tar'sus, for to seek to seek for Saul:
26. And and when he had found him, he brought him unto An'tĭ-ŏch. And it came to pass, that even for a whole year they assembled themselves were gathered together [a] with the church, and taught much people; And and that the disciples were called Chris'-tians first in An'tĭ-ŏch.

[1] Acts 9: 30.

[a] Or, *in the church.*

Jews, and through others as well as himself. He had the beauty of holiness, the graces of religion. **Full of the Holy Ghost.** He lived in the Spirit, and was endowed with power by the Spirit. **And of faith.** Perfect trust in the Lord, perfect confidence that Jesus was the Messiah; perfect devotion to his cause. He preached what he most heartily believed. **And much people was added unto the Lord.** Through the labors of such a good man. All his exhortations had the power of a good man behind them.

III. **Paul comes to the Assistance of the Antioch Church.** — Vs. 25, 26. **25. Then departed Barnabas.** (1) The great success of Barnabas brought more work than he could do alone, more open doors than he could enter, more opportunities than he could use. The fields were white to the harvest, and the laborers were few. (2) There was need of counsel and great wisdom to guide the new church aright, especially as there were two elements in the church. (3) There was need of another element, of instruction and training in doctrine, than Barnabas' special talents would provide. And Barnabas was wise enough to see this, and good enough to provide for it. **To Tarsus, for to seek Saul.** "Luke in 9: 30 mentions that Saul was sent away to Tarsus; and he now takes up the thread from that point. . . . He implies that the reader must understand Tarsus to have been Saul's headquarters during the intervening period." — *Ramsay.* See also Paul's own statement in Gal. 1: 21, 22.

It was during these years that Paul had the visions and revelations spoken of in 2 Cor. 12: 1–5, which may have prepared him for his great work. 2 Corinthians was written A. D. 56–58, and the revelations occurred more than fourteen years before, or in 42 or 43.

26. A whole year they (Barnabas and Paul) **assembled themselves with the church** (at their places of worship), **and taught.** The young church, just delivered from heathenism, had especial need of instruction.

NOTE the true Christian spirit in this whole movement. Two opposite tendencies of mind worked together because both were needed in the training of that young church, as in every church to-day. Barnabas was full of heart, of enthusiasm, of appeal to the feelings, of inspiration, of help for the poor, of comfort for the afflicted, of encouragement for the weak. He, equally with Paul, held the truth and loved the truth, but his mind worked in a very different manner. Paul was logical, though it was logic on fire. He reasoned out everything, he was educated and trained in the truth. He was enthusiastic, but he never abandoned himself to his enthusiasm. Each supplemented the other. More people would be reached by both than by either one alone. They needed the mutual influence of one upon the other.

NOTE. Each one was good enough and great enough to recognize the good in the other. One of the greatest dangers of the modern church lies in the fact that so many strong men, in certain directions, are not large enough and broad enough to see the value of the minds that differ from theirs. Theological professors write sneers in their books concerning great evangelists. And sometimes evangelists do not recognize the good in the methods of the professors. In each case it simply proclaims their own narrowness.

CHRISTIANS. **The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.** Not by the Jews who would not recognize Jesus as Christ, that is, Messiah, but by the people outside the disciples. "It belongs to popular slang." — *Ramsay.* "To the keen-witted populace of Antioch already famous for their bestowal of nicknames." — *Knowling.* So "Methodist" and "Puritan" were names first given in ridicule, and then transfigured by those who bore them.

Were called (χρηματίσαι) meant originally *to transact business*, and later, *to bear a name*, used in business transactions, *a firm name*, as not a few of our names originated, such as John the Smith, Peter the Cooper, James the Carpenter. The special characteristic of the disciples was that they belonged to Christ. Dr. Cox suggests that the word was applied to Christians as making Christianity *the daily business of their lives.* This is true, but, as Professor Vincent says, it is forced as a deduction from this word.

Christians, χριστιανούς. Christ, with the termination *ianos*, not a Latin termination,

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27. And Now in these days there came down [1] prophets from Je-ru'sa-lĕm unto An'tĭ-ŏch.

28. And there stood up one of them named [2] Ag'ă-bŭs, and signified by the spirit Spirit that there should be a great dearth throughout famine over all the [a] world: which came to pass in the days of Clau'dĭ-us Cæ'sar.

29 Then And the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send [3] relief unto the brethren which that dwelt in Jū-dæ'a:

30. [4] Which which also they did, and sent sending it to the elders by the hands hand of Bar'na-băs and Saul.

[1] Acts 2: 17; 13: 1; 15: 32; 1 Cor. 12: 28.
[2] Acts 21: 10.
[3] Rom. 15: 26; 1 Cor. 16: 1.
[4] Acts 12: 25.
a Greek, *the inhabited earth.*

though such a termination was often used in Latin, but probably Greek, like the *Christ*, to which it is attached. It has been shown to be common among the Greeks. Later Christianos was modified to Chrestianos (both words being pronounced alike). The latter means *useful*, *helpful*, and is found on some inscriptions. One very like it, but imperfect, has been found in Pompeii.

PRACTICAL. 1. Let us keep Christ's name, *disciples*, learners, and the new name *Christian*, to show that a Christian is always a learner.

2. "Do nothing to the reproach of that worthy name by which we are called; that that may not be said to us, which Alexander said to a soldier of his own name, that was noted for a coward, 'Either change thy name or mend thy manners.'" — *Henry*. This name was a witness to the preaching and teaching of the church. Christ was the center of all. He was all and in all. Earnest Christianity has always been Christo-centric. All doctrines, all influences, all history even, circle around the cross of Christ, as astronomers used to say that all the stars and constellations are circling around the star Alcyone in the Pleiades.

IV. **The Famine and the Relief Fund.** — Vs. 27-30. **27. In these days.** While the church was being founded in Antioch. **Came prophets.** Those speaking forth God's message.

28. Agabus. Nothing is known about him, beyond what is told here, and a symbolic prophecy some years later concerning Paul (Acts 21: 10). **Great dearth** (famine) **throughout all the world.** The term οἰκουμένην refers to the inhabited world of the Roman Empire. — *Knowling*, *Ramsay*. "We have ample evidence as to a widespread dearth over various parts of the Roman Empire, to which Suetonius, Dion Cassius, Tacitus, and Eusebius all bear witness, in the reign of Claudius; and in no other reign do we find such varied allusions to periodical famines." — *Knowling*. "Dr. Schürer seems to require a distinct statement that a famine took place in the same year all over Europe, Asia, and Africa. But that is too hard on Luke, for he merely says that famine occurred over the whole (civilized) world in the time of Claudius. The great famine in Palestine probably occurred in A. D. 46. **In the days of Claudius**, who reigned A. D. 41-54.

29. The disciples . . . determined to send relief. The prophecy of the famine was made in order to give the disciples time to collect money and food in advance of the need. They believed the prophet, and proceeded to prepare the relief. This would require some time, "for it would have shown criminal incapacity to send gold to a starving city," and they must purchase supplies. "The money was probably collected by weekly contributions, for the congregation was not rich, and coin was not plentiful in Syrian cities." — *Ramsay* in *St. Paul, pp. 48-50*.

30. Which also they did, after the famine had begun, and after the persecution by Herod, and Herod's death in A. D. 44. Most of the early Christians at Jerusalem were probably poor; and the persecutions would be most likely to drive away those best able to support themselves. **By the hands of Barnabas and Saul.** This was Paul's second visit to Jerusalem. Professor Ramsay regards it as the same visit as that described in Gal. 2: 1-10. McGiffert regards this visit as the same one described in Acts 15 as well as in Gal. 2.

This distribution by the hands of the leaders in the Gentile church, of the bounty gathered in Antioch, would make a most favorable impression. It was an expression of gratitude for the spiritual favors received. It would bring the churches together in brotherly love. It would tend to dissipate any prejudices or fears the Jews may have entertained.

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It would show that the gospel produced the same fruits among Gentile believers as it had produced in the Jerusalem disciples. It was a means of grace and spiritual growth to the church at Antioch.

" Is thy cruse of comfort failing? Rise and share it with another,
And through all the years of famine it shall serve thee and thy brother.
Love divine will fill thy storehouse, or thy handful still renew;
Scanty fare for one will often make a royal feast for two."

LESSON VI. — May 11.

PETER DELIVERED FROM PRISON.

Acts 12: 1–9.

Study Verses 1–19.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.*** — PSA. 34: 7.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

There is a good opportunity here to test and confirm the Bible knowledge of the scholars by calling their attention to different persons of the same name; as three by the name of James (which one is referred to here?), and four Herods whose deeds are referred to, two in the Gospels, and two in the Acts.

PLACE IN THE HISTORY.

These events occurred probably in the interval between Agabus' prophecy of the famine and Paul's carrying the relief fund to Jerusalem, as described in our last lesson. This chapter also closes the first part of the Acts relating to the foundation and development of the church, in connection with the apostles. From this time the story is chiefly the missionary history of the church, in connection with the Apostle Paul.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Attention is drawn especially to the **contrasts** in the providential history of different persons, as the death of James and deliverance of Peter; the long life of Herod that slew the Bethlehem innocents, and the short life of the Herod that murdered James.

A. D. 44. In the spring. The Passover that year was April 1–8.

Time. The martyrdom of James took place just before, and the release of Peter just after, and the death of Herod in the same month.

Place. Jerusalem. The prison was, perhaps, the tower of Antonia.

LEARN BY HEART.

V. 5; Heb. 1: 14; Psa. 91: 1–4.

PICTURES.

Deliverance of St. Peter, Raphael (Vatican); *Peter delivered from Prison*, Hans Memling (Venice); *Peter delivered from Prison*, Lippi (Florence); *St. Peter and the Angel*, detail of the above, Lippi.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

On Herod. — *The Herods*, by Farrar; Josephus, *Antiq.* 18, 6; 19: 8, 9; Shürer's *Jewish People in the Time of Christ*, 1st div., vol. II., pp. 150–165. A pathetic story of Herod in connection with the Feast of Tabernacles (A. D. 41) is told by Farrar, p. 179, and Schürer, p. 150.

On James. — See Vance's *College of the Apostles*, and the Bible Dictionaries. A touching account of his martyrdom is given in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* 2: 9.

On Peter. — Wm. M. Taylor's *The Apostle Peter;* a most excellent sermon by Professor Churchill in *Monday Club Sermons* for 1876, p. 387. Keble's *Christian Year* has a poem on the deliverance of Peter; Mrs. Sigourney has a poem on this subject, and there is a poem on it by I. D. Burns, quoted by Arnot in his *Church in the House*, p. 281. Volumes on prayer and its answers, such as Professor Phelps' *The Still Hour*, Murray's *In the School of Prayer*, and Trumbull's *Answers to Prayer*. The description of the gate of an Eastern city,

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Van Lennep's *Bible Lands*, represents the probable structure of this outer prison gate. A curious account of Eastern customs, respecting knocking at the door, is given by Professor Porter in his notes to *Kitto*, p. 250. On the ministry of angels, see Whately's *Good and Evil Angels*.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

These can be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

The circumstances.
James the brother of John.
Peter's deliverance.
Why Peter was delivered and James not.
What the disciples prayed for.
How they prayed.
Did their surprise show a want of faith?
The contrasts.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: Deliverance in Answer to Prayer.

I. THE MARTYRDOM OF JAMES (vs. 1, 2).
The circumstances. Death of James.
Herod. Death of Herod.

II. THE IMPRISONMENT OF PETER (vs. 3, 4.)

III. THE PRAYER-MEETING FOR PETER (v. 5).
When. Where. How they prayed.
For what they prayed.

IV. HOW THE PRAYER WAS ANSWERED (vs. 6–11).
Peter sleeping. The angel. The escape.

V. HOW THE ANSWER WAS RECEIVED (vs. 12–17).

VI. SOME LESSONS ON PRAYER.
From this deliverance.

VII. ILLUSTRATED BY CONTRASTED LIVES.
James and Peter. James and John.
James and James. James and Herod.
James and Stedhen.

1. Now about that time Hĕr'od the king stretched put forth his hands to vex afflict certain of the church.

I. The Martyrdom of James. — Vs. 1, 2. 1. **Now about that time.** During the events occurring in Antioch. It was the spring of A. D. 44, on which date authorities agree. **Herod the king.** "There was no portion of time for thirty years before, or ever afterwards, in which there was a king at Jerusalem, a person exercising that authority in Judea, or to whom that title could be applied, except the last three years of Herod's life, within which period the transaction here recorded took place." — *Paley*.

Herod.

It is well to keep in mind the four Herods most intimately connected with the gospel history: —

1. *Herod the Great*, the founder of the family, was the murderer of the innocents at Bethlehem. He died the spring after the birth of Jesus, B. C. 4.

2. *Herod Antipas*, his son (B. C. 4–A. D. 39), was the Herod who murdered John the Baptist.

3. *Herod Agrippa I.*, grandson of Herod the Great, was the king who murdered the Apostle James in the lesson for to-day (A. D. 37–44).

4. *Herod Agrippa II.*, before whom Paul defended himself. (Acts 26: 28.)

Dr. Leonard W. Bacon says, "I know a volume of sermons by a preacher of no small celebrity, in which the dying terrors of Herod (Agrippa I.) when 'eaten of worms' in the book of Acts are traced to his remorse of conscience for the murder of John the Baptist in the Gospels" (by Herod Antipas, his uncle).

The churches had enjoyed a period of rest from persecution by the Jews, because the Roman Emperor Caligula had given the Jews enough to keep them busy in defending themselves from his interference with their religion. Caligula died in 41, and Claudius began to reign. His mother wittily called him "the outline of a man which had not been filled up." He did not attempt to force the Jews to worship him, nor to set up his statue in the temple. Herod Agrippa, a Jew in part by descent, a "scapegrace adventurer," "a fugitive bankrupt," had helped Claudius to be accepted as emperor, and saved him from a violent death. In return the new emperor showered favors upon Herod and made him king. He curried favor with the Jews in every way. He hung in the temple as a votive offering the gold chain the Emperor Caligula had given him. He lived in Jerusalem, and punctually observed the traditions of the fathers, and secured the fervent loyalty of the Pharisees. At the feast of tabernacles in 41 he took the readers' stand and read the whole book of Deuteronomy

The Circumstances.

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2. And he killed Jāmes [1] the brother of Jŏhn with the sword.

[1] Matt. 4: 21.

aloud, "bursting into tears as if quite overcome when he reached the words, 'Thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, who is not thy brother.'" He feared that because he had Edomite blood in his veins he might incur the hatred his grandfather Herod the Great had borne, and took this way to gain the political favor of the Jews who cried out, "Don't weep, Agrippa, thou art our brother."

In pursuance of this policy he **stretched forth his hands to vex,** κακῶσαι, *to do evil* (κακός) *or injury to, to oppress, to maltreat. Vex* is used in the Old English sense of *torment, oppress* (not in the signification of petty annoyances which modern usage gives to the word). **Certain of the church.** Because the Jews were intensely opposed to them, all the more because of their rapid growth.

2. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. James was the son of Zebedee. He was one of the first disciples of Jesus, and with John and Peter was one of the most advanced and favored of his followers. These three were admitted to the death chamber in Jairus' house, to the Mount of Transfiguration, and to the nearest place in the Garden of Gethsemane. He, with John, was ambitious to be nearest Jesus in his kingdom, and felt sure that he could drink of the same cup of suffering as his Master (Matt. 20: 20–24), and his death shows that he stood the test. He, with his brother John, was named by Jesus, "Boanerges," *a son of thunder*, probably on account of his fiery, impetuous disposition, and perhaps his burning eloquence. It was this prominence and activity in the cause that probably led Herod to select him for his first victim.

Death of James.

A touching tradition concerning his martyrdom is given in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* 2: 9: "The messenger who led him to the judgment seat, beholding his witness, was moved to confess himself a Christian. Both were therefore led away, says he, and on the road (to execution) he asked forgiveness from James. And he, having considered for a little, said, 'Peace be to thee,' and he kissed him tenderly. And thus both were beheaded together."

Within about a month after slaying James (March) Herod himself died a horrible death at Cesarea (April). He went to Cesarea to a magnificent festival given in honor of Claudius' safety, probably from his journey to Britain, "to signalize the pretended triumphs of the poor mock emperor there." "A vast multitude assembled to see the festival and games, and before these, the king, in all the pride of high state, appeared in robes inwrought with silver threads. The time chosen was daybreak, so that the kindling sun, shining on this grand mantle, lighted it into dazzling splendor. Presently, some of the flatterers, always at hand beside a king, raised the cry, echoing a reminiscence of the days of Caligula, 'Deign to be gracious to us, thou divine one! hitherto we have honored thee as a man; henceforth we own thee more than mortal!' Instead of rebuking such lying servility, the worthless creature drank in this hollow adulation with high pleasure. Next moment a great pain racked his bowels. Conscience-stricken, as a Jew, at his blasphemous folly, the poor wretch felt that the wrath of God had struck him down, and the cry rose from him, in his agony, 'See, your god must now give up life, and hastens into the arms of corruption!' In the Acts we are told that he 'was eaten of worms.' Round his palace at Cesarea, where he lay five days in sore distress before he died, vast numbers of Jews in sackcloth and ashes lay prostrate, shrieking, and

Death of Herod.



Sitting in Sackcloth.

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3. And (because / when) he saw (that) it pleased the Jews, he proceeded (further) to (take / seize) Pe'ter also. (Then were l the days of unleavened bread. / And *those* were the days of unleavened bread.)

4. And [2] when he had (apprehended / taken) him, he put (him / him) in prison, and delivered (him / him) to four quaternions of soldiers to (keep / guard) him; intending after (Easter / the Passover) to bring him forth to the people.

5. Pe'ter therefore was kept in (the) prison: but prayer was made (without ceasing / earnestly) of the church unto God for him.

[1] Ex. 12: 14. [2] John 21: 18.

imploring the Holy One to spare the king's life." — *Geikie* in *Hours with the Bible* from Josephus' account.

II. **The Imprisonment of Peter.** — Vs. 3, 4. 3. **He saw it pleased the Jews,** according to his policy outlined above. **He proceeded further to take Peter also,** as the most prominent disciple. The man who "ordered a fight between fourteen hundred gladiators, whom he hypocritically declared criminals, requiring them to continue the combat till all were killed" (*Geikie, Josephus*), to please the populace, would not hesitate to kill an apostle to gain popularity with the Jewish leaders.

4. **And when he had apprehended him.** Implying that there was some delay in accomplishing the arrest. — *Rendall.* It was a few days after the martyrdom of James, and at the beginning of the Passover feast, which continued April 1 to 8. **Put him in prison.** "The military prison within the fortress of Antonia, which was also the residence of King Herod in Jerusalem." — *Rendall.* **Delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers.** A *quaternion* is a band of four soldiers on guard at one time, two within, one on each side of Peter, bound one to each of his arms with chains, a third posted outside the door, and a fourth in the passage leading to the outside gate. All this besides prison doors and great iron gates, belonging to the strongest government on earth. Escape was humanly impossible. Peter had once escaped from the prison of the Sanhedrim (Acts 5: 19), and they did not intend that he should get away again. **Intending after Easter** (that is, the Passover) **to bring him forth,** to sentence him to death before **the people.** He would not execute him during the Passover festival, because that would offend the Jews whom he wished to please.

III. **The Prayer-meeting for Peter.** — V. 5. **Peter therefore was kept in prison** for some days, so that there was a possibility of release, by divine interference through a miracle, or through a change in Herod's purpose. "In v. 5 there is a pitched battle. Read it: 'Peter therefore was kept in prison': there is one side of the fight; after the colon — 'but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.' Now for the shock of arms! Who wins? Prayer always wins." **But prayer was made.** According to Christ's promise to prayer, with the emphasis on united prayer. They would have acted as well as prayed, if there was anything they could do. But "man's extremity is God's opportunity." Prayer was the only weapon they could use. It was Herod with all the power of the Roman Empire, on one side, and the feeble church holding on by prayer to the almighty power of God, on the other.

HOW THEY PRAYED. **Without ceasing,** ἐκτενής, *stretched out*, either in time or intensity. The R. V. uses the form ἐκτενῶς, *earnestly, fervently*, signifying "*intense strain*, feeling on *the rack*." Compare the old torture of the rack. Both meanings are included, for intense prayer would naturally be continuous, unceasing, the intensity unfailing till the answer came. **Of the church.** "The members of the church were so numerous that they must have met in different companies." — *Hackett.* The central point of meeting was the well-known "house of Mary, the mother of John, which is called Mark" (v. 12). As the season of prayer lasted at least through the week of the Passover, there may have been a continual gathering at this place of the saints, while the individuals composing the meeting were changing. But at home, at business, — everywhere, — prayer was going up from their hearts, as fragrance exhales from a rose wherever it is carried. It was the fervent, effectual prayer of righteous men which availeth much.

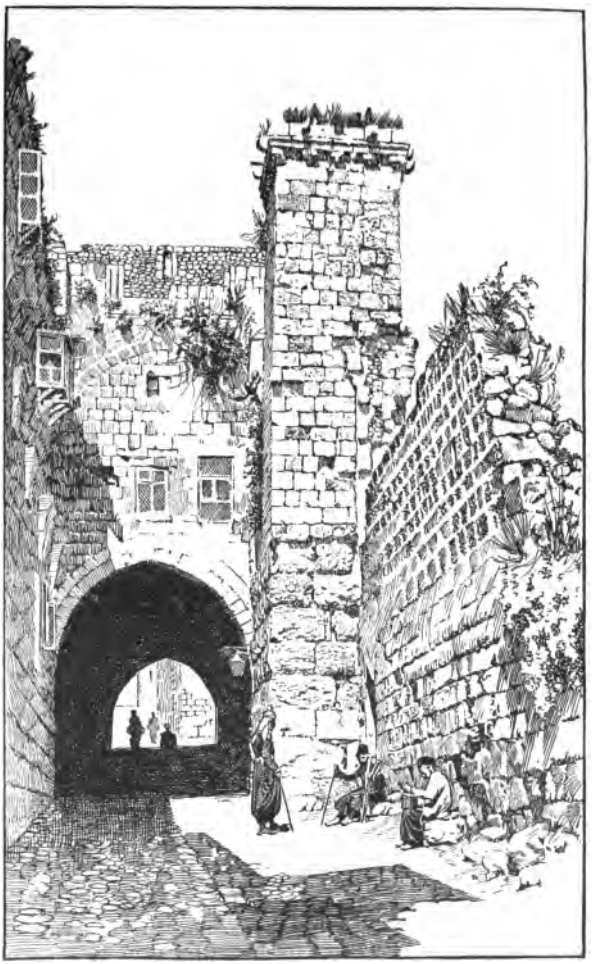
ILLUSTRATION. "Could Herod have seen those saints upon their knees, he might have exclaimed, as did Ethelred, the Saxon king, when he saw the monks of Bangor praying against him for the success of their countrymen: '*They* have begun the fight against me. Attack *them* first.'" — *Professor Churchill.*

FOR WHAT THEY PRAYED. We shall misunderstand their faith, and their reception

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6. And when Hĕr'od [would have brought / was about to bring] him forth, the same night Pē'ter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and [the keepers / guards] before the door kept the prison.

of the answer, unless we note for what they prayed. (1) Plainly it was first for the release of Peter, if it was God's will. They well knew their Master's prayer in Gethsemane, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou *wilt*" (Matt. 26: 39). (2) In connection with a former imprisonment, they prayed "that with all boldness they may speak thy word" (Acts 4: 29), so here they prayed that Peter might be sustained and strengthened and comforted. Perhaps the shadow of his former denial of his Lord made their prayer for him more intense. But they knew how unfaltering he had been, ever since, more true to Christ than needle to the pole. (3) Most of all, that Christ's kingdom might prosper; and all that came to Peter might, in some wise way, aid the cause dearer than life to him and to them. This was a great crisis in the history of the church, as we can see if we consider what would have been left out of its history had Peter died at this time. We know too little of what is best for ourselves or the cause, to insist on any particular form of answer without the addition, "Thy will, not mine, be done."



From a Photograph by Bonfils.
Tower of Antonia.

ILLUSTRATION. There is in Florence a picture of a Dominican supper, in which St. Dominic, with the other monks, is asking the blessing, and praying at a table set with dishes, but with no food. While he is praying, the angels with bright-colored wings bring them an abundance of food.

IV. **How the Prayer was Answered.** — Vs. 6–11. 6. **When Herod would have brought him forth.** The prayer, therefore, continued for more than a week. **The same night.** The night before his trial. "It is always darkest before dawn." Perhaps the delay was to test and increase the faith of the disciples. **Peter was sleeping.** In conscious peace and trust in God, like David, in Psa. 3: 5, who, pursued by his son,

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7. And behold, [1] the [an] angel of the Lord [came upon him, stood by him,] and a light shined in the [prison; cell:] and he smote Pē'ter on the side, and [raised him, awoke him,] up, saying, [Arise Rise] up quickly. And his chains fell off from [his his] hands.

8. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And [so he did. he did so.] And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

9. And he went out, and followed, [him;] and [he] [2] wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought [3] he saw a vision.

[1] Acts 5: 19. [2] Psa. 126: 1. [3] Acts 10: 3, 17

and surrounded by dangers, still slept in peace. "For so he giveth his beloved sleep." With how many psalms Peter may have sung himself to sleep, as Paul and Silas did in the prison at Philippi. Wonderful are the songs in the night. His peaceful sleep was the triumph of faith.

COMPARE Christian and Hopeful in the dungeon of Giant Despair.

"As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm;
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

— *Goldsmith.*

Between two soldiers, bound with two chains. Probably to the soldiers, as was a common Roman mode of securing prisoners. See Paul's case (Acts 21: 33). **The keepers before the door** outside of the cell. "Everything was done to make his escape impossible. He could not move without disturbing the slumbers of two soldiers, lying close beside him," and every avenue of escape was guarded.

7. **And, behold.** Peter was not missed by the guards till sunrise, — about six o'clock (see v. 18). It was then in the fourth watch, some time between three and six o'clock, that the angel presence entered the prison chambers (*Schaff*), for the loss would have been discovered at the change of guards at three o'clock, had Peter then been missing. **The** (an) **angel of the Lord came upon him.** "I believe that angels wait on us as truly as ever they waited on Abraham, or Jacob, or Moses, or Elijah, or Mary, or Jesus himself. The mediæval painters were fond of filling the background of the Infancy with countless angels; the representation, though literally false, was morally true. I believe that angels are encamping around them that fear the Lord." — *Geo. Dana Boardman, D.D.* **And a light shined.** The natural effluence of angelic presence. **In the prison,** οἰκήματι, *cell*, or *chamber* in the φυλακή, *prison;* the word used generally in this account for prison. **And he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up.** Rather, *roused* him up. The verb indicates that he awoke him from his sleep, but not that he helped him to arise. — *Cambridge Bible.* In the beautiful fancy of Keble, the wearied apostle, sleeping, as he thought, his last sleep, and dreaming of the glorious witness to his Lord he was to bear when the day dawned, would naturally mistake the angel's touch and voice for the summons to execution. At the eternal gates he waits in his blissful trance, —

"The unexpressive notes to hear
Of angel song and angel motion,
Rising and falling on his ear
Like waves in Joy's unbounded ocean.

His dream was changed — the tyrant's voice
Calls to that last of glorious deeds;
But as he rises to rejoice,
Not Herod, but an angel leads."

His chains fell off, that bound him to the sleeping soldiers, one hand to each.

8. **Gird thyself.** The Orientals, when they go to rest, do not undress fully, as we do; or, rather, do not change their dress; they simply loosen their girdle and lay aside their outer garment. — *Beda.* **Bind on thy sandals,** σανδάλια, "*wooden soles*, the shoes of the poor as distinguished from those of the more wealthy." "Peter still observed his Master's rule" (Mark 6: 9). — *Knowling.* **Cast thy garment,** ἱμάτιον, *his outer cloak*, or *mantle* laid aside with his sandals. He would need these articles, and the action showed him that the appearance was a reality and not a dream.

9. **And wist.** Imp. of the Old English *wis*, "to know"; from the same root as *wise*.

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10. When (And when) they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth (unto / into) the city; [1] which opened to them of (his / its) own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and (forthwith / straightway) the angel departed from him.

11. And when Pē'ter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a (surety, / truth,) that [2] the Lord hath sent (forth) his angel, and [3] (hath) delivered me out of the hand of Hĕr'od, and (from / from) all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

12. And when he had considered *the thing*, [4] he came to the house of Mā'ry the mother of [5] Jŏhn, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together (and were) [6] praying.

13. And (as Pe'ter / when he) knocked at the door of the gate, a (damsel / maid) came to (hearken, / answer,) named Rhō'da.

14. And when she knew Pē'ter's voice, she opened not the gate for (gladness, / joy,) but ran in, and told (how / that) Pē'ter stood before the gate.

15. And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she (constantly / confidently) affirmed that it was even so. (Then said they, / And they said,) [7] It is his angel.

[1] Acts: 16: 26.
[2] Psa. 34: 7; Heb. 1: 14.
[3] Job 5: 19; Psa. 33: 18, 19; 2 Cor. 1: 10.
[4] Acts 4: 23.
[5] Acts 15: 37.
[6] V. 5.
[7] Gen. 48: 16; Matt. 18: 10.

10. First and the second ward. Guard, sentinels, or guard-rooms, where a guard would be. The guards were probably sleeping. **The iron gate.** Heavy, locked, and barred. Peter could not have opened it. **Leadeth unto the city.** This "may have formed the termination of a court or avenue which connected the prison with the town." — *Hackett*. **The angel departed.** Having done his work. Peter could now find his own way.

"The seraph's wing
Outspread in parting flight. With snowy trace
Awhile it hovered, then like radiant star
From its orbit loosed, went soaring up,
High o'er the arch of night. Then Peter knew."
— *Lydia Sigourney*.

11. Was come to himself. Awaked from his dazed condition. **Now I know.** Hitherto he did not know what the Lord's plans for him were, whether to die as a martyr, or go on and preach the gospel. Now he understood.

V. **How the Answer was Received.** — Vs. 12–19. **12. When he had considered,** *συνιδών, to see together, to take in the whole situation at a glance.* He saw all the elements of the case, and decided in view of them all. **Came to the house of Mary.** Because it was probably here that the disciples were frequently gathered for their meetings. **Mother of John . . . Mark.** John is his Hebrew name, and Mark (Marcus) his Latin name. He was a cousin of Barnabas (so "nephew" should read in Col. 4: 10) the author of the Gospel according to Mark, and the companion of Paul and Barnabas in their first missionary journey.

13. Peter knocked at the door of the gate. The gateway to the street at the end of the passage leading from the inner court, and always kept fastened. **A damsel . . . Rhoda** (Rose). She seems to have been the servant of Mary. **Came to hearken.** As was the custom before opening the gate. The gate is never opened till the visitor has satisfied inquiries. "The lovely outline sketch of Rhoda has made her immortal. This rose (so the name means) 'smells sweet and blossoms in the dust.'" — *Maclaren*. "God, who leaves in oblivion names of mighty conquerors, treasures up that of a poor girl for his church in all ages." — *Quesnel*.

14. When she knew Peter's voice. "An indication that Peter had before been a frequent visitor at the house." — *Abbott*. **She opened not the gate for gladness.** "She was so eager to make the others assembled there that night partakers of the great joy she felt in knowing that Peter was alive and free, that she ran back and forgot to open the door when she heard his well-known loved voice." — *Schaff*. Dr. Porter says that this has often happened to himself on his return home from a journey.

15. It is his angel. His guardian angel, assuming his form and voice, a common

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16. But Pē'ter continued knocking: and when they had opened, *the door,* and they saw him, they and were astonished. amazed.

17. But he, [1] beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him forth out of the prison. And he said, Go shew Tell these things unto Jāmes, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into to another place.

[1] Acts 13: 16; 19: 33; 21: 40.

Jewish belief. "This belief in guardian angels was common to the Greeks and Romans. Every scholar will recall the famous instance of Socrates." — *Gloag.* Compare Matt. 18: 10; Heb. 1: 14.

16. **They were astonished.** This does not indicate, as so many commentators have inferred, that these praying disciples "had small expectation of an answer." It is *not* "a striking instance of how slow of heart to believe are even the most devout." It is *not* "an example of weakness of faith." On the contrary, where could we find the true prayer of faith if not in this week of unceasing prayer by the whole church, continued all night, and spoken of as the human cause of the release. *They were astonished, not at the* FACT *of an answer, but at the* STRANGE WAY *in which it came.* They had no way of knowing *how* God would answer their prayers, nor what was really best. They knew that the best men had died martyrs. And if God should release Peter, they probably had some plan of their own as to how God would do it, perhaps through working on the mind of Herod. They could not plan an angel visit from God.

17. **Go shew these things unto James.** The brother of our Lord (Gal. 1: 19), and leading disciple in the church at Jerusalem. He must have been very close to Peter. **He departed.** To escape from Herod. He could not count on deliverance if he refused to use the means. But he lived many years after Herod was dead. Vs. 18, 19 mention the excitement produced by the escape, and Herod's command that the keepers be executed. This is reported to show that the escape was by direct intervention of God, and not by connivance with the keepers. The narrative then proceeds to describe the death of Herod during the same month.

VI. **Some Lessons on Prayer. Illustrated by Contrasted Lives.** — 1. Prayer is a real power. God can give, to those who pray, blessings which it would not be wise to give to the prayerless.

2. God has many angels of many kinds to do his will. We see the sicknesses and accidents and death that come to good people, and sometimes ask where are God's answers to prayer? Where are his guardian angels?

"What is the ordinary course of our life? Is it full of daily accidents? Is it not rather crowded with daily mercies, unseen and unnumbered? Is not calamity occasional, not habitual? Then there is something higher than life, dearer than wealth. Your *spiritual perfection* is a nobler thing than these. It is *that* the angels are commissioned to aid in securing." — *Professor Churchill.*

COMPARE Whittier's *Poems.* "The angel of St. Mark" gives a beautiful story of angelic deliverance. (See p. 61.)

All God's angels come to us disguised;
Sorrow and sickness, poverty and death,
One after another lift their frowning masks,
And we behold the seraph's face beneath,
All radiant with the glory and the calm
Of having looked upon the front of God. — *Lowell.*

Around our pillows golden ladders rise,
And up and down the skies,
With wingèd sandals shod,
The angels come and go, the
Messengers of God.
— *Stoddard.*

3. We, with our narrow vision, cannot tell what is the best answer to our prayers, whether long life, or an early heavenly crown; whether victory, or defeat that brings larger victory; whether bodily relief, or spiritual gifts; whether the bitter cup removed, or, as in Christ's case, drained to the dregs, bringing salvation to the world; whether Paul's thorn be removed, or grace given to bear it; whether the answer comes in this life, or the next.

4. CONTRAST JAMES AND PETER. Questions will arise why James was allowed to die, while an angel was sent to deliver Peter. We can only say, as Jesus once said to Peter, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter," and his other words,

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"Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." "James' work was done on earth to be taken up in heaven. How different to the eye of sense the dealings of God with some of his servants from his dealings with others. Those he gloriously delivers; but shall we, therefore, conclude that those God delivered, and these he did not deliver? Should we not rather say those were delivered openly, and in the face of the world — these as really delivered; however, their deliverance did not as manifestly appear." — *Trench.* Compare the story of Peter's crucifixion, "*Domine Quo Vadis?*"

5. CONTRAST JAMES AND JAMES. James, the brother of John the apostle, active and well known, died in the early days of the church, a martyr; while James, "the brother of our Lord," who did not become a disciple till about the time of the crucifixion, became the head of the church at Jerusalem and lived there many years, and wrote the Epistle of James about A. D. 63, twenty years after the martyrdom of his namesake. One lives forever as an apostle and martyr, the other by his written word. Both ways of usefulness are good.

6. CONTRAST JAMES AND STEPHEN. The only notice of James in the Acts is the simple notice of his name at the ten days' prayer-meeting before Pentecost (Acts 1: 13), and the story of his death in one short verse (Acts 12: 2); while Stephen, the deacon, has a chapter and a half, sixty-eight verses. The reason seems to lie in their position in reference to the development of the church. One was a single stone in the foundation of the church, the other was a seed out of which grew a new order of things, having to do with the conversion of Saul, the reception of the Gentiles, and the missionary work throughout the world.

7. CONTRAST JAMES AND JOHN. These two brothers, sons of Zebedee, served God and aided his cause in very different ways; the one brother dying early, the other living to become the oldest of the apostles, ninety to one hundred years old. But the youthful martyr was a success, as well as the aged saint. It is the work done, not the length of life, that makes success. Some men can serve God best by proving the reality of faith and love, the supremacy of principle, the power of Christ to sustain in affliction and death. It does not make so much difference on which side of the stream of death we do our work. The crown of success may be in heaven. That crown can be seen in Rev. 2: 7, 17; 3: 5, 12, 21; 7: 13–17

8. CONTRAST JAMES AND HEROD. Both died the same month, the fisherman apostle and the king who, with an annual income of $2,000,000, died in debt. One closing a life of usefulness, the other a life most of which he could wish were blotted out of the book of remembrance. One an earthly crown, the other a heavenly.

LESSON VII. — May 18.

THE EARLY CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES.

Acts 13: 1–12.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***Go ye therefore and teach all nations.*** — MATT. 28: 19.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The First Book of the Acts has been completed. It extended over about sixteen years of time, over Palestine and Syria in extent, and over the origin and early development of the church in history.

The Second Part now begins, and is a history of foreign missions, chiefly under Paul. Henceforth we spend most of our time traveling with him over a large part of the Roman Empire, with occasional visits at home.

The New Center. — We can, perhaps, illustrate to the scholars by a simple diagram. Everything at first radiated from Jerusalem, some of the rays reaching to

LEARN BY HEART.

V. 2; Matt. 28: 19, 20; Rom. 10: 14, 15.

PLACE IN THE HISTORY.

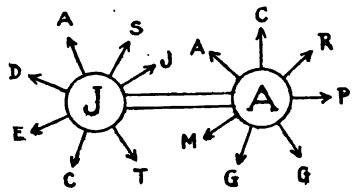
Time. The beginning of the great missionary movement in behalf of the Gentiles, probably in A. D. 46 or 47. In the spring. — *Rendall, etc.*

Place. Antioch in Syria, and the island of Cyprus.

Rulers. — Claudius Cæsar, emperor of Rome, 41–54. Cuspius Fadus, governor of Judea. The Romans are in Britain, seeking to subjugate the country.

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Damascus, to Antioch, Samaria, Joppa, Tarsus, Cyrene in Africa, Ethiopia. One of



these rays reaching to Antioch became as it were a new sun, from which light radiated over Asia and Europe. The letters indicate some of the countries evangelized.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: The First Missionaries, and One Incident of their Work.

I. A MISSIONARY CHURCH (vs. 1, 2).

Antioch. Some of the leading men in its church. Characteristics of the church.

II. THE FIRST FOREIGN MISSIONARIES (vs. 2, 3).

Their calling. The church sends them. Objections to missions answered.

III. THEIR FIRST MISSION FIELD (vs. 4–11).

Cyprus. Why chosen first.
The magician, the governor, and Paul.
The contest for a soul.

IV. THEIR FIRST RECORDED CONVERT (v. 12).

Practical suggestions.

THE SECTION

includes the lesson, and a review of Paul's conversion and early Christian life, in Acts 9: 1–30 and Gal. 1: 13–24.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

These can be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

Characteristics of the Antioch church.
The five leading men.
How the missionaries were called.
Why a church should have the missionary spirit.
Cyprus.
The Magian.
Why made blind.
What led to Sergius becoming a Christian.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

Professor Ramsay's *St. Paul the Traveler*, pp. 64–88; McGiffert's *Apostolic Age*, pp. 151–176; Abbott's *Life and Letters of Paul*; the many writers on the life of Paul referred to on pp. 9, 10; Professor Ramsay's *Church in the Roman Empire*; Professor Wilkinson's *Epic of Saul*, "Saul and Sergius"; works on missions such as Professor Clarke's *A Study of Christian Missions*; Dr. Dennis' *Christian Missions*; Dr. Pierson's *New Acts of the Apostles*.

PICTURES.

Elymas struck Blind, Raphael (South Kensington, London).

1. Now there were [1] in the church that was at An'ti-och certain at An'ti-och, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers; as [2] Bar'na-bas, and Sim'e-on Sym'e-on that was called Nī'gĕr, and [3] Lu'cius of Cy-rē'ne, and Măn'a-ĕn, which had been brought up with the foster-brother of Hĕr'ŏd the tē'trarch, and Saul.

[1] Acts 11: 27. [2] Acts 11: 22–26. [3] Rom. 16: 21.

I. **A Missionary Church.**—Vs. 1, 2. 1. **Now there were . . . at Antioch.** On Antioch, see Lesson V. **Prophets**, προφῆται. The word is from φημί, *to speak*, and πρό, *before, in front of*. The meaning of the preposition may have reference to *time*, viz., *before, beforehand, foretelling*, or to *place*, viz., *in front of, forth*, and so, *publicly forthtelling*; and this latter meaning, in turn, easily runs into that of *in behalf of; for*. The prophet is, therefore, one who speaks for God, the interpreter of God; one who brings a message from God, inspired by God. The forthtelling may be to announce future events, or to declare truth and duty. These were men of insight and foresight, with minds especially susceptible to divine influences. **Teachers.** Instructors in truth and duty; those who studied God's Word and his providence, and the nature of men, and instructed the church. The difference is something like that between preachers and teachers, evangelists and more permanent pastors, poets and logicians.

There has been a discussion whether some of these five were prophets and others teachers, or whether all had both qualifications. It is most probable that all partook of both powers, but that the emphasis of some, according to their natural tendencies, was more on the prophetic work, and of others on the teaching element. **Barnabas.** Mentioned, as is Saul,

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2. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Hō'ly Ghōst said, [1] Separate me Bar'na-bās and Saul for the work [2] whereunto I have called them.

[1] Num. 8: 14; Acts 9: 15; 22: 21; Rom. 1: 1; Gal. 1: 15.

[2] Matt. 9: 38; Acts 14: 26; Rom. 10: 15; Eph. 3: 7, 8; 1 Tim. 2: 7.

without remark because he has just been named in the narrative. **Simeon.** Another spelling of Simon and "Symeon," R. V. **Called Niger,** *i. e.*, black. The name had no more to do with his race or color than now you can tell the color or race of Mr. Black, or Mr. Brown, or Mr. White from his name. Simon Black was a useful, worthy saint, a power in Antioch, but unknown to history. **Lucius** (not Luke, Greek, *Lucas*, but a different name) **of Cyrene,** a province of northern Africa. He may be the same person as is described by Paul as his kinsman (Rom. 16: 21); and one of the men of Cyrene mentioned in Acts 11: 19, 20, as carrying the gospel to Antioch. **Manaen.** The same as Menahem, one of the kings of Israel. **Which had been brought up with.** One word in the Greek, the σύντροφος, either the *comrade*, or the *foster-brother* of **Herod the tetrarch** (Antipas). "There are two views as to the import of σύντροφος. One is that it means *comrade* — literally, *one brought up*, educated, with another. It was very common for persons of rank to associate other children with their own, for the purpose of sharing their amusements and studies, and by their example serving to excite them to greater emulation. Josephus, Plutarch, Polybius, and others speak of this ancient practice. The more approved opinion is that it means *collactaneus*, nourished at the same breast, *foster-brother*. The mother of Manaen, according to this view, was Herod's nurse. In either case the relation is mentioned as an honorary one." — *Hackett.* He was, no doubt, a person of considerable influence and rank. But he must have become a Christian from out of the worst influences, as the companion of such a wicked, unscrupulous, debauched man as this Herod Antipas who murdered John the Baptist. Manaen must have been a man of strong character and devoted piety; and have been an old man at this time, as Herod Antipas began to reign B. C. 4, fifty years before.

It is worthy of remark how two men, brought up in the same family, under the same influences, lived such different lives and reached such different ends as Manaen and Herod. Compare Abel and Cain. No surroundings are so bad, but a child may grow into a saint from amidst them; and none so good, but a child may become bad in spite of them.

"So from the heights of will
Life's parting stream descends,
And, as a moment turns the slender rill,
Each widening torrent bends.

"From the same cradle side,
From the same mother's knee,
One to long darkness and the frozen tide,
One to the peaceful sea."

And Saul. Mentioned last as the latest comer, perhaps the youngest, and as Luke was writing probably what Paul himself told him, he would naturally place himself last.

NOTE how useful persons may be who are unknown to history. So Philips Brooks says that the larger part of the world's work is done by persons of the one or the two talents.

SEE Gray's Elegy: —

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear."

2. As they ministered to the Lord, λειτουργούντων. Derived from the unused word λείτος (λαός, *the people*), *public, belonging to the State;* and ἔργω, *to work*. Hence, *serving the State at one's own expense*, and thence, *the free service of God*, as in worship, teaching, giving, or any other way. Our word "liturgy" is derived from it. "Here the context seems to point to some unusual public religious service." — *Knowling.* Ramsay translates, "As these were leading a life of religious duties and fasts." They were giving themselves up to special meetings for religious services, seeking the higher life and a fuller knowledge of duty. **And fasted.** Fasting would seem to have its basis in, first, a grief over sin so deep and intense that all desire for food is taken away; or such a strong desire for holiness, for the progress of God's work, for the removal of all that hinders it, that we forget to eat. Therefore it implies that we are doing that which fasting expresses. It is saying, I desire this good gift of God more than food, more than bodily pleasure, more than all else besides. So putting away every sin at any cost, taking up hardest duties, confession of sin to our neighbors, doing all we can for the love of Christ, are expressions of the same principle which underlies fasting. The second basis of fasting is in the aid to devotion fur-

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3. And, Then, [1] when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

[1] Acts 6: 6.

nished by a body unburdened with food, so as to leave the mind and heart in their most active and free condition. Exactly the same principle is employed by all our college athletes in preparation for a great contest. They go without, they fast from, many good things which they freely use at other times.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ANTIOCH CHURCH. (1) It was large; (2) deeply in earnest; (3) ready to learn from teachers; (4) guided by the Holy Spirit; (5) utilizing varied talent; (6) generous in giving; (7) broad-minded; (8) holding special meetings; (9) growing; (10) full of the missionary spirit.

II. **The First Foreign Missionaries.** — Vs. 2, 3. **The Holy Ghost said.** In answer to their prayers, and to their spirit of service. It is not stated by what means the Holy Spirit voiced his will, whether through prophets or through a general simultaneous impulse pervading the church. We must be careful not to limit the ways in which the Holy Ghost speaks to us. Impressions on the feelings are not the only language of the Spirit. He speaks to us by conscience, by reason, by providence, by his word, and by inspiration, by speaking unmistakably within our souls, and within the church as a whole. **Separate me,** *i. e.*, set apart for this special work. **For the work whereunto I have called them.** Paul was called definitely at the time of his conversion, Barnabas perhaps in a more general way, by fitness, by providence, by an inward call, by spiritual longing.

ILLUSTRATION. THE TWO EARS OF THE REFORMER. Professor Curtis in a lecture on President Lincoln said that men had two ears, and often a different anthem was sung in each. The reformer has one ear opened toward God and he hears by that alone and goes forward. The politician has only one ear open, and that to man, and he marches to that anthem alone. The statesman has one ear open to God, and the other to man, and when he hears the same anthem in both ears he goes forward. Paul and Barnabas heard the anthem of the call of God and the anthem of the needs of man, and both sang the same marching song.

FINDING OUR MISSION. God has called each of us to some special work in his kingdom. It is of the first importance that we find out what that work is, and enter upon our Father's business. We can find out in the same way that Paul and Barnabas did: (1) The Holy Spirit will teach us. The promise is as true to us as to them. (2) We shall find out the will of the Spirit by prayer and fasting; that is, by intensely earnest seeking, with a complete yielding to God, to do with us as he will. (3) The knowledge of our work will come gradually to us, as we prove our fitness, and are led on in the duties and work that come to us day by day.

SEE Bushnell's great sermon on "Every Man's Life a Plan of God," and *The Loom of Life*, by Dr. Peloubet (35 cts., United Soc. Christian Endeavor).

3. **And,** rather, "then." In response to the command of the Holy Spirit. **When they** (the church) **had fasted and prayed,** indicating a special meeting held for the purpose. **And laid their hands on them.** By representatives of the church; thus recognizing their commission as from the church, guided by the Holy Spirit; expressing the fact that the prayers, the sympathies, the authority of the church were communicated to them. The church thus accepted them as their missionaries, and pledged themselves to sustain them by their sympathy, their prayers, and whatever aid they might need. This was especially necessary because there were still many Jews who did not favor the evangelization of the Gentiles as Gentiles, and looked upon Peter's vision and the reception of Cornelius as a personal and extraordinary case. But now this great mission was authorized by the church, acting under the direct influence of the Holy Spirit. So Calvin.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS. 1. One of the first privileges and duties of a strong church is to be a center of missionary influence. We are told to

> "Measure our writings by Hesiod's staff,
> Which teaches that all has less value than half."

We should learn the same lesson in our churches. The large church that sends many of its best men and women to evangelize others, and supports them, will be stronger by the gift.

2. The Holy Spirit guides the church as really now as it did then, and in many ways. The International Lesson system, the Young People's Societies of Christian Endeavor, the

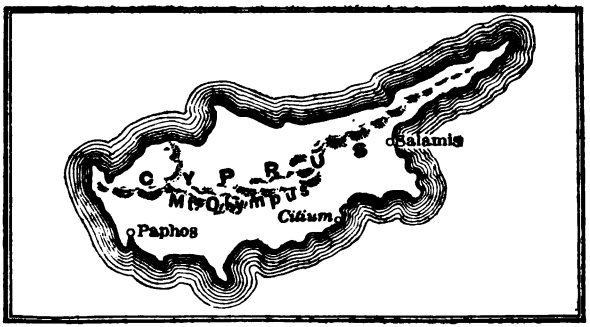
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4. So they, being sent forth by the Hō'ly Ghōst, (departed unto / went down to) Se-leū'cĭ-a; and from thence they sailed to [1] Cy'prŭs.

5. And when they were at Săl'ă-mĭs, [2] they (preached / proclaimed) the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also [3] Jŏhn (to their minister, / as their attendant.)

6. And when they had gone through the (isle / whole island) unto Pā'phŏs, they found [4] a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name (was Bar-je'sus: / was Bar-Je'sus;)

[1] Acts 4: 36. [2] V. 46. [3] Acts 12: 25. [4] Acts 8: 9.



Map of Cyprus.

Woman's Christian Temperance Union, our missionary societies and Bible societies, and many other developments of Christian activity, have been as really inspired by the Holy Spirit as was the sending of these first two missionaries.

3. OBJECTIONS TO MISSIONS ANSWERED. Every objection to modern missions is here answered by the Holy Ghost himself: (1) "There were many unconverted ones" at Antioch, as there are now in Christian lands. And there always will be till we obey God, and preach the gospel to every creature. (2) "All the men and means are needed at home." But the missionary spirit brings more men and means to the home work than if none went as missionaries. (3) "What a waste of men!" But the Holy Spirit selected the best men in the ancient church for this foreign work. (4) "The heathen are well enough off without the gospel." Why, then, did the Holy Spirit send Paul to them? Therefore, the same obligation rests on us, as on this ancient church, to send the gospel to the heathen.

III. **Their First Mission Field. The Contest for a Soul.** — Vs. 4–11. **4. Sent forth by the Holy Ghost**, as related above. Luke keeps before our minds the fact that the origin of the missionary work was the Holy Spirit. The disciples before had been urged to go by persecution; now they went spontaneously under the influence of the Spirit. **Departed** (went down from the higher land to the sea) **unto Seleucia.** The seaport of Antioch, sixteen miles away down the river Orontes. **Sailed to Cyprus.** A voyage of eighty to one hundred miles. There are several probable reasons why they went first to Cyprus: (1) Cyprus was the native island of Barnabas, who would gain a freer opening for his work through acquaintances and friends; (2) it was on the way to Asia Minor and the regions beyond; (3) Paul, a native of Cilicia, spent ten years of his Christian life there, only a short distance from Cyprus; (4) some of the disciples driven from Jerusalem by persecution had preached the gospel in Cyprus (Acts 11: 19), and some of these had been to Antioch and knew Paul and Barnabas; (5) the inhabitants were generally Greeks, but many Jews had settled there, attracted by the rich and productive copper mines.

Cyprus was about one hundred and fifty miles long and sixty miles wide.

5. Salamis was on the eastern extremity of the island, the nearest port to Antioch. **They preached the word of God.** God's message of love and salvation through Jesus the Christ. **In the synagogues.** As was their invariable custom to do at first. For the Jews were most easily reached, since they believed the Bible and expected the Messiah. **And they had also John.** John Mark, author of the Gospel according to Mark, cousin of Barnabas, and son of Mary of Jerusalem (Acts 12: 12, 25). **To their minister.** For their assistant or attendant. He probably was anxious to go, and could in many ways be of excellent service, while at the same time he was in training for further usefulness. If Paul was not very strong physically, and if his eyesight troubled him, as is generally thought, John Mark would be especially needful. Those who do so much must have others do for them all that is possible.

6. Gone through the isle. The "whole island." The word for *gone through* is one

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7. Which was with the deputy of the country, proconsul, Ser'gĭ-us Pau'lus, a prudent man; who man of understanding. The same called for unto him Bar'na-băs and Saul, and desired sought to hear the word of God.

used, not merely to express traveling, but "the process of going over the country as a missionary for the purpose of evangelizing." — *Ramsay.* **Unto Paphos.** Now Baffo, at the western end of the island. **A certain sorcerer,** *μάγον, magician, wizard* (wise-ard), *sage*, the name given to the wise men from the East (Matt. 2: 1, 7, 16). "The Magian represented in his single personality both the modern fortune-teller and the modern man of science." "It is certain that the priests of some Eastern religions possessed very considerable knowledge of the powers and processes of nature; and that they were able to do things that either were, or seemed to be, marvelous." "No strict line could be drawn between science and magic, between the search for the philosopher's stone, or the elixir of life, and the investigation of the properties of argon, or the laws of biology." — *Professor Ramsay.* **A false prophet.** One who falsely pretended to influence the future, and to foretell as from some higher beings the future at which he could only shrewdly guess. He was an impostor, false in character and aims, misleading men, teaching false doctrines, false morality for the sake of his own profit. **A Jew.** Luke uses "the triple beat, Magian, false prophet, Jew." — *Ramsay.* **Bar-jesus.** Son of Jesus, or Joshua.

7. **Which was with the deputy.** As one of his train which always accompanied a Roman governor; a friend and associate. "This position was an honorable one, gratifying at once to ambition, to vanity, and to worse passions." "Reports of the strange arts practised excited almost fanatically the imagination both of the populace and the aristocracy of Rome. Syrian fortune-tellers crowded the capital and appeared in all the haunts of business and amusement. The strongest minds were not superior to their influence. Marius relied on a Jewish prophetess for regulating the progress of his campaigns. Pompey, Crassus, and Cesar sought information from Oriental astrology. Juvenal points to us the Emperor Tiberius 'sitting on the rock of Capri with his flock of Chaldæans around him.'" — *Hackett.* "Magicians of all kinds found a welcome in unexpected quarters in Roman society, even at the hands of otherwise discerning and clear-sighted personages, as the pages of Roman writers from Horace to Lucian testify." "It is quite possible that Sergius Paulus may have been keenly interested in the powers, or assumed powers, of the Magian, and in gaining a knowledge of the strange religions which dominated the East." — *Knowling.* Like most noble souls he hungered for better things, for the assurances of immortal life, for true religion, for rest and peace of soul. Even the wisest men without Christ were but

> "Infants crying in the night;
> Infants crying for the light;
> And with no language but a cry."

Deputy. Greek, "proconsul," that is, the governor of a province under the senate at Rome. This was formerly regarded as a mistake, because Strabo, the historian, says that Cyprus was an imperial province, under the emperor, and therefore the governor would be called a "proprætor," not a proconsul. But it was discovered that Augustus (B. C. 22) transferred Cyprus to the senate, and Luke uses the right word — proconsul. This is confirmed by a Greek inscription at Soloi in the north of Cyprus, found by General Cesnola, and dated "in the proconsulship of Paulus." **A prudent man.** R. V., "a man of understanding," of practical ability, of good common sense and judgment. There must have been something in Elymas, or such a man would not have made him a companion. But in the darkness of that age of general unbelief as to the future, when even "Cato and Cesar confessed to the senate that the belief in a future existence was fabulous," a thoughtful mind would catch at everything that gave hope of eternal life, at least so far as to investigate. Even now "The Society for Psychical Research," including some of the most learned professors in English and American universities, is investigating similar phenomena. **Called for Barnabas and Saul.** This shows his sound mind. He would search wherever there was hope of more light. "That Paul got a hearing with the consul, Professor Ramsay suggests, was because he appeared in the character of a traveling teacher of moral science, such as were common in that age." Professor Wilkinson, in his *Epic of Saul*, regards Sergius Paulus as one of the companions of Saul on his way to Damascus discussing religious questions.

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8. But [1] El'y-măs the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away aside the deputy proconsul from the faith.

9. Then But Saul, (who also is *called* Paul,) who is also *called* Paul, [2] filled with the Hō'ly Ghōst, set fastened his eyes on him,

10. And and said, O full of all subtilty guile and all mischief, villany, 3 *thou* child thou son of the devil, *thou* enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

11. And now, behold, [4] the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

[1] Ex. 7: 11; 2 Tim. 3: 8.
[2] Acts 4: 8.
[3] Matt. 13: 38; John 8: 44.
[4] Ex. 9: 3; 1 Sam. 5: 6.

8. But Elymas. Not necessarily a proper name. It is simply Aramaic for Magian, magician, sorcerer. **Withstood them.** Opposed them, because he saw that his influence and power and the emoluments of his place were gone if Sergius Paulus accepted the gospel. "In the East it is always believed that the governor's friend may influence his judgment; and every suppliant, every litigant, and every criminal tries to propitiate or to bribe the friend." — *Professor Ramsay.* So that such a man could gain great wealth and power from his relations to the governor. **Turn . . . from the faith,** from believing the gospel. The action of Elymas shows that Paul had made no little impression on the governor.

9. Saul (who also is called Paul). This connects the two names with the same man. In the story of his life among the Jews he is called by his Jewish name Saul. Now that he is beginning his labors among the Roman Gentiles, his Roman name is used from this time on. See Ramsay's *St. Paul*, p. 83, etc., and his *Was Christ born in Bethlehem?* p. 54. **Set his eyes,** ἀτενίσας, from τείνω, *to stretch*, and ἀ intensive, *to fix the eyes intently* upon. Our word "attention" is a close ally.

10. Full of all subtilty. Deceit, guile, underhandedness. **And all mischief,** ῥᾳδιουργίας, from ῥᾴδιος, *easy, with facility*, and ἔργω, *to work*; hence, ease in doing, facility, and in a bad sense spoken of a man who does evil easily, adroitly, naturally; hence, unscrupulousness, laziness, and the evil that comes from wanting gains unearned. *Facilis descensus Averni.* **Child of the devil.** And like his father. He had been adopted by Satan by his own choice; an immense fall from his child name *Bar-jesus*, son of Jesus, or Joshua. "Paul was not flinging bitter words at random, or yielding to passion, but was laying the black heart bare to the man's own eyes, that seeing himself as God saw him might startle him into penitence." — *Maclaren.* **Devil,** διαβόλου, *slanderer, false accuser*, and therefore the **enemy of all righteousness,** and therefore opposed to Jesus, who is the sun of righteousness, whose kingdom is one of righteousness and pledged against every form of evil, while every form of evil could flourish under the false religion Elymas represented. **Pervert the right ways of the Lord.** Referring not to perverting men, but God's ways with men to save them, — his truths. Thus he slandered God and true religion by misrepresenting them. Perverted truths are the most dangerous of errors. "The corruption of the best is the worst."

11. The hand of the Lord, not of Paul. Paul announced the fact, but did not produce it. Hand is the instrument by which a work is performed. **And thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun.** This phrase indicates total blindness. "In the case of partial blindness, the eye cannot discern *objects*, but is able to recognize the *light*; when the sun cannot be discerned, the blindness is absolute. He who was endeavoring to lead others into darkness is himself blinded; so ever the framers and maintainers of superstition and ignorance are by it brought into blindness of mind and soul." — *Abbott.* See John 9: 39 and Matt. 25: 29. **For a season.** "Until the time" when he should cease his opposition, and God sees fit to restore his sight. God punishes only so much as is necessary. The blindness was doubtless like that of St. Paul himself, to give him an opportunity to come into spiritual light. He could think, but he could do no harm while he was blind. It was a mercy to Elymas as it had been to Paul. Another object was to produce an effect upon others. "The blindness of Elymas opened the eyes of the procon-

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12. Then the deputy, proconsul, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine teaching of the Lord.

sul." — *Felten.* **A mist and a darkness.** Expressing the gradual progress of the loss of sight, ending in complete blindness.

IV. **The First Convert** (so far as the history relates). — V. 12. **Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed.** The miracle was not his only reason for believing. The apostles had been teaching and preaching, and this miracle completed the evidence and turned the scale. **Believed.** Became a disciple of Christ. His reason and his conscience were convinced, his fears aroused, his hopes are excited, and now he yields his will. He finds that all good, all argument, power, righteousness, truth, high motives, salvation, his conscience, his reason, his welfare, — all are on the side of Christ. He therefore trusts himself wholly to Jesus and becomes a disciple. The victory was won. **Being astonished at the doctrine** (the teaching) **of the Lord,** both at the manner of teaching, thus confirmed by miracle, and at what was taught about the Lord. The new truths from heaven, the new views of the love of God, the promises and blessings of the gospel, forgiveness of sin, new life, the presence of the Holy Spirit, were a new and marvelous revelation to the governor, and far more astonishing than the miracle.

PRACTICAL. 1. The missionary, and every one who attempts to do good, must expect opposition, false charges, and every hindrance which the Bad interposes when the Good interferes with its gains. As Maclaren says, "Like a ship which plunges into the storm as soon as it clears the pier-head, the missionaries felt the first dash of the spray and blast of the wind as soon as they began their work."

2. As Paul and Elymas, the Holy Spirit and Satan, contended for the soul of Sergius, so there is a contest for all our souls. Satan uses bad men as tempters, our appetites and passions, our ambitions and desires, as means of temptation to draw us into evil. The Holy Spirit is using good men, and the gospel, and the power of Jesus Christ, God's providences, and a multitude of influences to bring us to goodness and heaven.

3. "We are apt to say, What a pity that Elymas was on the spot to interfere with the good work. As Christ said, when Lazarus died, 'I am glad for your sakes that I was not there,' so he might say in the case of Sergius Paulus, 'I am glad for his sake that Elymas was there with his sorceries.' For the efforts of the sorcerer to turn him away were overruled as the means of bringing him near. *If there had not been a fierce wind blowing against this kite, it would not have been able to rise.*" — *Arnot.*

COMPARE "The Fable of the Kite" in Whately's *Annotations*, p. 207.

4. The punishment of sin is often of the nature of the sin; blindness comes to the spiritually blind. The punishment is mingled with mercy; it is to lead them to repentance, to make them realize their blindness, and seek some one to guide them to the Light of the world.

LESSON VIII. — May 25.

PAUL AT ANTIOCH IN PISIDIA. — Acts 13 : 43–52.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.*** ACTS 13: 38.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The Map is quite necessary to the clear understanding of these lessons.

The Whole Section, including from v. 13 to the end of the chapter, should be included in the teaching.

It is Interesting to notice Paul's method of reaching these peoples who are hearing the gospel for the first time. Beginning in

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 46, 47; Gal. 2: 20; 2 Cor. 12: 7–9.

PRONUNCIATIONS.

An'tĭŏch (*ch*=*k*), Bär'năbăs, Cā'năan or Chā'năan (Kā'-năn), Cĭs (R. v., Kĭsh), Pămphyl'ĭă, Për'gă, Pĭsĭd'ĭă.

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the Jewish synagogue, with the Scriptures, he reaches the Jews by rightly interpreting the words they accept. From the Jews he reaches the Gentiles who have so much interest in religion as to go to the Jewish synagogue to hear him. From this standpoint he can reach the wider Gentile field.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. Immediately after the close of the last lesson; probably summer of A. D. 46 or 47. July, according to Professor Ramsay.

Place. Antioch in Pisidia, Asia Minor.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

Professor Ramsay's *Church in the Roman Empire* (pp. 8–13, 44, 64, 91, 111) shows that Antioch and the places named in our next lesson belonged to Galatia, and to the churches in these places and others the Epistle to the Galatians was written. Ramsay's *St. Paul the Traveler*, chap. 5. On the dangers and sufferings of Paul during this journey, see Conybeare and Howson, I., 162–168. The *Acts of Paul and Thekla*, while mythical, give an interesting view of the people and the country; see account of it in Ramsay's *Church in the Roman Empire*. "There is an interesting story of St. John and the bandits in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* III., 23. The incidents there told took place in Asia Minor."

On Paul preaching the resurrection, see the poem on King Edwin of England and the preacher Paulinus, in Bryant's *Library of Poetry and Song*, p. 389, and *Suggestive Illustrations* on Acts (in part), p. 286. Story of Francis Xavier's experience in Rome, given in Fish's *Primitive Piety Revived*, p. 162, and in Kip's *Conflicts of Christianity*, p. 185.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

These can be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

Why they did not stop in Perga.
Paul's sickness referred to in Galatians.
John Mark's return.
Paul's sermon.
Cause of the opposition.
Effect on the success of the gospel.
Joy in the Holy Ghost.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: Difficulties and Successes in Christian Work.

I. FROM CYPRUS TO PERGA.

The sickly season — Paul's infirmity.
Paul takes the lead.
John Mark returns to Jerusalem.

II. FROM PERGA TO ANTIOCH.

Antioch.

III. PAUL PREACHES IN THE SYNAGOGUE.

Outline of his sermon.

IV. AFTER-MEETINGS (vs. 43, 44).

During the week.
The following Sabbath.
Crowds and success.

V. OPPOSITION OF THE JEWS (v. 45).

Cause, jealousy.

VI. FOUR EFFECTS OF THE OPPOSITION (vs. 46–52).

First. Apostles more decided.
Second. Gentiles become Christians.
Third. The preachers expelled.
Fourth. Great joy.

I. **From Cyprus to Perga.** — It was probably in July that Paul, Barnabas, John Mark, and perhaps others, set sail from Paphos on Cyprus to the mainland of Asia Minor, and reached Perga, the seaport of Pamphylia on the lowlands of the coast. (Ramsay, Conybeare, and Plumptre agree, from different reasons, upon this season of the year.)

Some things are noticeable and interesting about this brief visit to Perga, for apparently the company did not remain long. No preaching there is recorded. It was the unhealthy season in the lowlands, and the missionaries left soon, either because most of the inhabitants had gone for health to the highlands (*Conybeare*), or Paul was taken sick and was compelled to leave (*Ramsay*).

FIRST. THE SICKLY SEASON. PAUL'S INFIRMITY AND THE THORN IN THE FLESH. Malarial fever is endemic on the low-lying plains, and the natural sanitarium is the mountainous region beyond. Professor Ramsay proves that at this time the Roman province of Galatia included Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra, and that, therefore, the Epistle to the Galatians was written to these cities among others, and that his statement that "through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at first" (Gal. 4: 13, 14) belongs to this period; and he thinks that this sickness was a return of his old malady, "the thorn in the flesh,

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the messenger of Satan sent to buffet him" (2 Cor. 12: 7), and was a severe attack of malarial fever. "In some constitutions malarial fever tends to recur in very distressing and prostrating paroxysms, whenever one's energies are taxed for a great effort." A strong corroboration is found in the phrase, "A stake in the flesh," which Paul uses of his malady. That is the peculiar headache which accompanies the paroxysms. "Within my experience several persons, innocent of Pauline theorizing, have described it as 'like a red-hot bar thrust through the forehead.'" "Every one who has traveled in Pamphylia knows how relaxing and enervating the climate is. In these low-lying plains the land is so moist as to be extraordinarily fertile and most dangerous to strangers. Confined (on the north) by the vast ridges of Taurus, 5,000 to 9,000 feet high, the atmosphere is like the steam of a kettle, hot, moist, and swept by no strong winds." We suppose, then, that Paul caught fever on reaching Perga. "It was precisely after fatigue and hardship, traveling on foot through Cyprus, amid great excitement and mental strain, that one was peculiarly liable to be affected by the sudden plunge into the enervating atmosphere of Pamphylia." "The treatment for such an illness would be prescribed by universal consent as either the sea or the high lands of the interior." — *St. Paul the Traveler.*

SECOND. From this time on Paul takes the lead. He is the head of the company. This was doubtless the fact, and Luke as the companion of Paul, and gaining many of his facts from him, would naturally put Paul in the front.

THIRD. At this place their assistant, John Mark, left them, and returned to Jerusalem. No reason is assigned; but it was plainly one not satisfactory to Paul (Acts 15: 37, 38). It is a slander on a good young man to merely say that he was homesick, "and wanted to go and see his mother" in Jerusalem. There have been a number of reasons suggested, as that he was dissatisfied with the fact that Paul superseded his cousin Barnabas as leader; that he dreaded the perils that lay before them in the wild and dangerous country infested with bandits, through which they must pass; that Paul's preaching and action in eating with the Gentiles troubled the conscience of one who had been strictly brought up in Jerusalem; that he was anxious about his mother. All these had doubtless more or less influence, but the most natural reason on Professor Ramsay's theory of Paul's sickness, I have not seen mentioned, — that John Mark, too, was attacked with the depressing malarial fever, and felt unable to go through the rough experiences that lay before them, while at the same time this sickness emphasized all the other reasons. Paul went on with his work in spite of his sickness, and he thought that the more delicate young man should do the same.

The effects of his return were more than Mark anticipated. He was the occasion of a separation between Paul and Barnabas. It took long years for him to regain what he lost. But he was restored. "A soldier who has wavered in one battle may live to obtain a glorious victory." And Mark *did* gain the victory. He was ready to go on the second missionary journey. He did go with Barnabas to Cyprus. He regained, by his noble and courageous conduct, the good opinion of Paul, to whom he became a comfort and a profit (Col. 4: 10; 2 Tim. 4: 11). There is comfort and hope for us in this for ourselves and for others. Some one has said, "He that makes no mistakes seldom makes anything else." But a wiser still has said, "It is not the making of mistakes that makes a man, but it is the wise use of mistakes that enables a man to be made." The diamond is polished with its own dust.

Put "failures" in place of "vices" in Longfellow's "Ladder of St. Augustine."

> "Saint Augustine! well hast thou said
> That of our failures we can frame
> A ladder, if we will but tread
> Beneath our feet each deed of shame."

II. From Perga to Antioch of Pisidia. — To this journey, without doubt, belong many of the perils and dangers described by Paul in 2 Cor. 11: 23–27. "Pisidia was a barbarian country, almost destitute of Greek culture, and barely subjugated by Roman arms." The roads were bad and overrun with bandits. Antioch was the chief city of Pisidia in southern Galatia. Greek was understood by many, but among the common people each tribe had also its own language. It was "on the great imperial high road which traversed Asia Minor from east to west, north of Mount Taurus, at this time, and connected Syria and the East by way of Ephesus with Greece and Rome." — *Rendall.*

When the missionaries reached Antioch, their first work was to go to the Jewish synagogue on the Sabbath, where, as distinguished strangers from the more cultivated regions, they were asked by the leaders to speak to the people, as was the custom, after the Scripture lessons of the day had been read. "Some rumor that they were preachers of a new

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43. Now when the congregation was broken / synagogue broke up, many of the Jews and religious of the devout / [1] persuaded urged proselytes followed Paul and Bar'na-bas: who, speaking to them, [2] them to continue in the grace of God.

44. And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God.

[1] Acts 11: 23; 14: 22. [2] Tit. 2: 11; Heb. 12: 15; 1 Pet. 5: 12.

and remarkable doctrine must have already spread in the little Jewish community, and it was evidently expected that they would be called upon. Paul instantly accepted the invitation. Usually a Jewish preacher sat down during the delivery of his sermon, as is freely done by Roman Catholics abroad; but Paul, instead of going to the pulpit, seems merely to have risen in his place, and with uplifted arm and beckoning finger, he spoke to the expectant throng." — *Farrar.*

III. **Paul preaches the Gospel in the Synagogue at Antioch.** — Compare Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2: 14–36); Stephen's sermon before the Sanhedrim (Acts 7), Paul's address on the castle stairs at Jerusalem (Acts 21: 40–22: 21), and before Agrippa (Acts 26: 1–29).

THE TEXT. JESUS IS THE PROMISED MESSIAH OF THE JEWS.

THE ARGUMENT. 1. In your past history see the plans of God unfolding for his kingdom.
2. The kingdom was established in the house of David.
3. The promise of the everlasting kingdom was to the house of David.
4. Jesus, a descendant of David, is the promised Saviour and Messiah.

OBJECTION ANSWERED. But Jesus died, slain by the rulers at Jerusalem.
Yes, but God raised him from the dead, and he is a living Saviour.

THE APPLICATION. Here is the forgiveness of sins, the way of salvation.
Believe on him or you must perish.

IV. **The After-meetings.** — Vs. 43, 44. At the close of the service the apostles went out before the congregation was dismissed, for so according to the best authorities v. 42 should read, "And as they" (the apostles) "went out of the synagogue of the Jews, the Gentiles" (proselytes) "besought them," etc. They were so interested in the gospel, especially the Gentile portion of them, for it gave them unexpected blessings and privileges, that they wished to hear more.

43. Now when the congregation was broken up. Dismissed, after Paul and Barnabas had left. **Many of the Jews and religious** (devout, worshiping) **proselytes,** προσηλύτων. "Originally one who *arrives at* a place, a stranger; thence, one who *comes over* to another faith." — *Prof. M. R. Vincent.* **Followed.** Came to the apostles, not waiting till the following Sabbath. **Who** refers to the apostles. — *Knowling.* (But Rendall makes it refer to those who received the word, persuading the apostles to continue to preach the same gracious truths.) **Persuaded.** Induced them by persuasion. **To continue in.** Implying that they had received the gospel, and come already into **the grace of God.** τῇ χάριτι, from the same root as χαίρω, *to rejoice*, and hence, primarily, *that which gives joy and delight*, then the *loving, kindly favor* of God which is expressed toward men and which produces in them the graces, which are the source of true joy, which are delightful to the possessor and pleasing to the beholder. This grace shone around the new converts, and was noticed by the heathen around. It brought to them a new vision of God's grace. It was no longer confined to the Jews and those who were willing to become Jews, but the gates to the city of God were seen to be on every side, and flung wide open with a welcome to every race, every nation, every condition of men, to all who would receive it by repentance and faith. It was the dawn of a new day to them.

During the week the knowledge of the gospel would be spread everywhere. The apostles would be engaged in conversation with all who came to them, so that on (44) **the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city,** not merely Jews and proselytes, but the heathen, **to hear the word of God.** "It is clear that the Jewish synagogue could not have held such a crowd, and we are led, accordingly, to the conclusion, either that they thronged round portals and windows, while the apostles spoke within, or that the

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45. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, jealousy, and [1] spake against those contradicted the things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. [a] blasphemed.

[1] Acts 18: 6; 1 Pet. 4: 4; Jude 10. [a] Or, *railed.*

crowd gathered in some open space or piazza in which the synagogue was situated, and were addressed from its entrance." — *Plumptre.*

CROWDS AND SUCCESS. Crowds are not success nor a proof of success. Any cause of excitement, useless or evil, can draw crowds. And a preacher may fail to draw crowds and yet be successful, provided he fills the few with new life, fresh truth, and strong inspiration. Some of the most important discourses of Jesus were spoken to one hearer or to a few. Some of Paul's greatest epistles were written to individuals. But such discourses and epistles were like "the shot heard round the world," and their sound is still vibrating over all Christendom.



Jewish Synagogue.

But crowds are a means of success. You must have people to hear you if you would reach their souls. And each individual is stronger and more deeply influenced because of the people around him. Some one has said that "a large Sunday school is often a large failure." That may be, but a small one that might be large is a crime. The best of work may be done with small numbers, but not with a church or school that has not done its best to gain as many as possible to learn its blessed truths.

V. **The Intense Opposition of the Jews.** — V. 45. **When the Jews saw the multitudes.** They wanted the Gentiles to be saved by becoming Jews, and they labored for this end, hoping thus to bring in the kingdom of God. But the popularity of the new teaching of these strangers was shown by the multitudes who came to hear. And **they were filled with envy.** "Jealousy," ζήλου, from ζέω, *to boil with heat.* Our word "zeal" is almost a transliteration of the Greek. It means *boiling over with excitement, intense fervor (boiling) of spirit.* Here it is used in the bad sense, boiling over with fierceness of indignation, with rivalry, jealousy. The jealousy was bad, but it was not wholly base and selfish. It was mistaken, but connected with their religion and their highest hopes.

THE REASON FOR THE JEALOUSY. It arose (1) from the popularity of the two strangers, seeming interlopers, throwing the Jews into the background. (2) From the teaching which seemed to overthrow their own teaching and make their work and their office useless and obsolete. "Whoso breaketh a hedge (*i. e.*, the hedge of the law) a serpent shall bite him" (Ecclus. 10: 8). (3) From the difference between their own interpretation of the Scriptures and that of the apostles. They felt that the very foundations of religion were giving way under them, because their interpretations were giving way. Because the little moss island they had built was settling down, they thought the whole continent of truth was sinking. They thought the ceiling was falling, because the cobwebs were swept away. Like the disciples, in the storm, on the Sea of Galilee, they were afraid at the approach of Jesus who could save them. (4) From the fact that the Gentiles were to be admitted to the same high privileges as themselves. See the parable of the laborers, Matt. 20: 11–15. (5) From the fact of so many heathen crowding into and around their synagogue.

Contradicting. They denied, argued against, which, if done in the right way and

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46. Then (And) Paul and Bar'na-bas waxed bold (spake out boldly), and said, [1] It was necessary that the word of God should first have been (be) spoken to you: but (Seeing) ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting (eternal) life, lo, [3] we turn to the Gĕn'tiles.

47. For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*, [4] I have set thee to be (for) a light of the Gĕn'tiles, that (That) thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends (uttermost part) of the earth.

[1] V. 26; Matt. 10: 6; Acts 3: 26; Rom. 1: 16.
[2] Ex. 32: 10; Matt. 21: 43; Rom. 10: 19.
[3] Acts 18: 6; 28: 28.
[4] Isa. 42: 6; Luke 2: 32.

with the right spirit, was eminently proper. But the word implies not argument, but assertion and denunciation. **And blaspheming.** "To blaspheme is here not to take God's name in vain, but to speak evil and slanderous words." — *Abbott.* They used abusive language, calling hard names, and saying false things about the apostles. They, doubtless, spoke of them as heretics, as renegade Jews, as destroyers of true religion, as keepers of evil company. They were certain to have some opportunity of perverting the words or acts of the apostles.

NOTE. (1) It is very noticeable that a large part of the sarcasms and epigrams against other people find their point in a perversion of the truth, and their venom is the poison of a liar. (2) No weapon acts in the end more like a boomerang, injuring the one that throws it, than this of slander and abuse. (3) This is doubly true on the part of any who use this weapon to defend the Church or Christianity, for it is so utterly contrary to the spirit of Christ. It is holding the blade in the hand, and smiting the enemy with the handle. The very use of it is an unanswerable argument against the user. Even Michael, the archangel, would not use such language against Satan himself (Jude 9).

VI. **Four Effects of this Opposition.** — Vs. 46–52. FIRST EFFECT. THE APOSTLES GREW MORE BOLD AND DECIDED. **46. Paul and Barnabas waxed (grew) bold.** R. V., "spake out boldly." The opposition had just the opposite effect from that which the Jews expected. It made the apostles take a more decided stand in favor of receiving the Gentiles. It was a costly step, and required great courage. (1) "Few acts are more courageous than the unflinching announcement of a most distasteful intention to an infuriated audience." — *Farrar.* (2) It made bitter enemies of those who could persecute them, and do them all manner of evil. (3) It separated them from their friends and co-religionists, and joined them to Gentiles just out of their heathenism. (4) It shut them out from a part of their work, from the synagogues, and those who should aid them. **It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you.** Because: (1) it was God's purpose and command (Rom. 1: 16; Luke 24: 47; Acts 3: 26); it was God's command, because (2) the Jews were most prepared to receive the truth, by their long training under God; (3) the proof of the Messiah and the understanding of his work would grow best upon the Jewish Scriptures; (4) they were the easiest channel by which the Gentiles could be reached; (5) this order to the Jews first, and then to the Gentiles, did not depend upon the rejection of Christ by the Jews, but would have been the more efficacious through the believing of the Jews (Rom. 11: 12). We have done our duty by you, but we cannot stop preaching the gospel because you **put** (thrust) **it from you.** You can lose its blessings, but you cannot stop its progress. **And judge yourselves.** By your actions you pronounce a verdict against yourselves, that you are **unworthy of everlasting life.** God offers it to you and you thrust it away. God opens the door to eternal life, and you shut it against yourselves, showing that you have not the heavenly spirit. So if a parent offers his child an education, and he refuses it, or one has an opportunity to do good, and he rejects it, in each case the one who refuses pronounces sentence against himself.

SECOND EFFECT. THE GENTILES BECAME CHRISTIANS. **Lo, we turn to the Gentiles,** and they shall enter the kingdom which the Jews refused. So Christ himself said, "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out" (Matt. 8: 11, 12).

47. For so hath the Lord commanded us. By showing them that Isa. 49: 6 and similar promises were to be so applied. **I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles.** See Acts 1: 8; Luke 2: 32. This was the mission of the Jews, "the servant of Jehovah," to be carried out through Jesus their Messiah, as the representative "servant of

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48. And when as the Gĕn'tiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: God: [1] and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

49. And the word of the Lord was published spread abroad throughout all the region.

50. But the Jews stirred up urged on the devout and women of honourable women, estate, and the chief men of the city, and [2] raised stirred up a persecution against Paul and Bar'na-bas, and expelled cast them out of their coasts. borders.

51. [3] But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto I-cō'nĭ-um.

52. And the disciples [4] were filled with joy and with the Hō'ly Ghōst.

[1] Acts 2: 47.
[2] 2 Tim. 3: 11.
[3] Matt. 10: 14; Mark 6: 11; Luke 9: 5; Acts 18: 6.
[4] Matt. 5: 12; John 16: 22; Acts 2: 46.

Jehovah." The religion of the Jews was never intended for themselves alone, but for all the world. By refusing to give it to the world, they lost it themselves. So it is still both with individuals and with churches. **Salvation unto the ends of the earth.** The gospel is not narrow, but world-wide. And this is one of the great proofs that it is divine. Other religions are for a race or nation or state of civilization. This is for all. And if our missionaries had done nothing more than prove that the gospel is adapted to all nations and stages of civilization, by what it has actually done among them, the expense of men and means would have been repaid a thousandfold.

48. The Gentiles . . . were glad. The good news to them was very great. **Glorified** by word and by deed. **As many as were ordained,** τεταγμένοι, *arranged, assigned a place*, as in an army, either by God (but even then not necessarily meaning an arbitrary act, but expressing the divine side of our life plan), or by themselves. *They placed* or *disposed themselves.* The Jews certainly arrayed themselves on the other side.

"The passive of this verb is used as equivalent to the middle, *e. g.*, Acts 20: 13, and repeatedly by Josephus, as many *as had marshaled themselves, placed themselves in the ranks of those who welcomed the offer of eternal life.*" — *Cook.* God's plans were not defeated because the Jews rejected the gospel.

49. The word . . . was published, etc. The opposition, as well as the joyous converts, made the gospel known far and wide. Compare the parable of the leaven. The opposition stirred the mass in which the active leaven was placed, and made it spread the faster.

THIRD EFFECT. THE APOSTLES WERE DRIVEN AWAY, only to spread the gospel the more. **50. The Jews stirred up** (urged on) **the devout** (the earnestly religious) **and honourable women,** of good social position and rank, perhaps wives of **the chief men.** The women were more intensely religious than the men, and were used as a means of urging on the men who might otherwise be indifferent. Josephus says that nearly all the married women in Damascus were attached to the Jewish religion (*Bell. Jud.* 2: 20, 2). Good persons, on account of their very love for the good, may, if mistaken, do a great deal of harm. All their devotion and zeal becomes a power to do wrong. Thus many good men have persecuted those better than themselves. How difficult it is to attain to "that finest and most Christlike flower of the spirit of toleration — namely, the tolerance of intolerance." **Expelled them out of their coasts,** "borders." "The persecution was probably a tumultuous outbreak, and the apostles, for the sake of peace, retired from the place." — *Schaff.*

51. Shook off the dust. So Christ had commanded them to do as a testimony (Matt. 10: 14), not in anger, but to show them that they did not leave them willingly to go to ruin, but the blame must rest upon themselves. **Came unto Iconium.** A large city in Lycaonia, sixty miles to the southeast of Antioch in Pisidia.

FOURTH EFFECT. GREAT JOY. **52. And the disciples.** Both the apostles who went and the Christians in Antioch who remained. **Were filled with joy.** "The tense is that which expresses the continuance of the state." — *Plumptre.* "It might have been expected that they would leave gloom and despondency among their discouraged converts; but it was not so. They left behind them the joy of a new hope, the inspiration of a new faith, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of those who had learned of the heavenly promise."—*Farrar.* **And with the Holy Ghost.** And this was the source of their *joy*, their strength, and their firmness. "Great is the power of Christian *joy*. A religion of gloom, of asceticism, of self-accusation, may be sincere and solid, but it wants the abounding strength, the rich consolation, the glorious attractiveness of a religion of *joy*,

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especially if it be the *joy* of those *filled with the Holy Ghost.*" — *Whedon.* The opposite state of mind was in the persecutors. Persecution, jealousy, slander, awaken no joy, no peace, no courage. They proceed from a bad spirit, and kindle painful feelings.

LIBRARY. Story of Francis Xavier's experience in Rome, given in Fish's *Primitive Piety Revived*, p. 162, and in Kip's *Conflicts of Christianity*, p. 185. Professor Drummond's *Pax vobiscum;* two examples in Earl's *Bringing in the Sheaves:* and French's *Poems*, "The Monk and the Bird."

LESSON IX. — June 1.

PAUL AT LYSTRA. — Acts 14 : 8–19.

Study Verses 8–22. Read Acts 14.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.*** — 2 TIM. 2: 3.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

To-day we are traveling in new regions with the apostles, and joining with them in their varied experiences.

Let us study them, their ways of working, their characters as developed or manifested under various circumstances, and learn some blessed lessons for our own guidance. These lessons shine everywhere throughout the section as the stars in the heavens. The light of the past should shine on our pathway to-day.

THE SECTION.

Our lesson to-day takes in the whole chapter, — the new experiences, the revisiting of the scenes of their previous labors, and their return to the home church at Antioch.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. A. D. 48 and 49.

Place. Southern Galatia, including Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, a glimpse at Antioch of Pisidia, and the return to Antioch of Syria.

PRONUNCIATIONS.

An′tiŏch, At′tăli′ă, Bâu′cĭs, Dĕr′bĕ, Icō′nĭŭm, Jū′pĭtĕr, Kō′nĭĕh, Lycāō′nĭă, Lys′tră, Pămphyl′ĭă, Mĕrcū′rĭŭs, Philē′mŏn, Pĭsĭd′ĭă.

PICTURE.

Raphael's famous cartoon of the *Healing of the Cripple at Lystra* (South Kensington).

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 15–17; Matt. 10: 28–31.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

These can be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

Light from the local legends of this region.
Why the apostles went to another place when persecuted.
The events at Lystra.
The success of the missions.
Confirming the churches.
Reporting to the home church.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: Varied Experiences in Doing Good.

I. THE MISSIONARIES AT ICONIUM (vs. 1–5).

Gospel beacon-lights — Legend of Paul and Thekla.

II. THE MISSIONARIES AT LYSTRA (vs. 6–18).

Lystra. The lame man cured.
The apostles treated as gods.
Baucis and Philemon.
Paul's sermon.

III. THE MISSIONARIES GO TO DERBE (vs. 11–21).

The apostles stoned.
Preaching in Derbe.

IV. REVISITING THE CHURCHES (vs. 21, 22).

V. RETURN TO THE HOME CHURCH.

Reports of the missionaries.

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THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

Besides the *Commentaries*, and works on the *Life of Paul*, we find no little fresh light in several books. Professor Ramsay's *Paul the Traveler*, chaps. 5 and 6, and his *Church in the Roman Empire*, "St. Paul's First Journey." He gives the route traversed by Paul. On Iconium and the legend of Paul and Thekla connected therewith, see Conybeare and Howson, chap. 6, and Mrs. Jamieson's *Sacred and Legendary Art*, II., 556. It is given in full in the *Acts of Paul and Thekla* in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. VIII., pp. 487–492; and a critical estimate in Ramsay's *Church in the Roman Empire*. The story of Jupiter and Mercury at the home of Baucis and Philemon is given in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and charmingly told in Hawthorne's *Tanglewood Tales*.

On v. 16 see Walker's *Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation*.

I. **The Missionaries at Iconium.** — Vs. 1–5. Driven away from Antioch, the missionaries proceeded southeast along the military road, called "the Royal Road," which led from Antioch to Lystra, and the East. Before they reached Lystra they turned off to the left and went to Iconium, the modern Konieh on the borders of Phrygia and Lycaonia.— *Rendall, Ramsay*. Iconium was a city of growing importance, situated on the western edge of the vast plains of Asia Minor, amid luxuriant orchards and gardens, about seventy-five miles in an air-line southeast of Antioch. It is now the terminus of a railway from the Bosphorus. — *Hastings' Biblical Dictionary*.

Here the missionaries had large success among both Jews and Greeks. As in Antioch, the unbelieving Jews made trouble, and doubtless for the same reasons. On this very account the apostles remained, and taught, and signs and wonders were done by them. Finally, the division was so great, and the party spirit ran so high, that Jews and Gentiles joined in an attempt (ὁρμή, from a root, meaning *to flow*; hence, *the rush of emotion, a violent impulse or onset, an impulse*) to mob and stone the missionaries who escaped to Lystra.

ILLUSTRATION. Farrar compares the triumphant progress of Christianity, in the midst of deadly opposition, to the magnificent description in the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus, of the fire-signals by which the Greek hero made known to his queen at Argos the capture of Troy. "The poet tells us how the courier flame flashed from mountain to mountain, leaping over the plains and seas" till it reached his home at Mycenæ. So the beacon-lights of Christianity flashed from Antioch to Cyprus, to Antioch of Pisidia, to Iconium, to Lystra, to Derbe, and later to Philippi, to Corinth, Athens, and imperial Rome.

THE LEGEND OF PAUL AND THEKLA. In connection with St. Paul's residence at Iconium, there exists a story of the conversion of a maiden named Thekla. The apocryphal "Acts of Paul and Thekla" represents the form into which the legend had grown in the fourth century. The story may at first have had some basis of truth, and, though most of it is mere legend, it gives us a vivid picture of the times. Thekla belonged to one of the noblest families in Iconium. While sitting at a window in her mother's house, she overheard Paul preaching in a neighboring house where he was staying. She was deeply affected and became a Christian. Her betrothed lover Thamyris accused Paul of being a magician, and using his power to persuade women from marriage. Paul was thrust into prison, scourged, and then expelled from Iconium. Thekla bribed the jailer, visited Paul in prison, and was instructed by him in the Christian faith. She was found there by her mother and lover, and was condemned to be burned to death in the theater. She was put upon the pyre, but the flames refused to burn her, like the three men in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace. Then a storm came on and quenched the fire and killed many of the spectators. Later she was condemned to be thrown to the wild beasts, but a lioness crouched at her feet, and defended her from a lion and a bear, dying in Thekla's defense. "After many troubles she joined St. Paul in his missionary travels, and ultimately made her home in the neighborhood of Seleucia, where she led the life of a nun till her death, which took place when she was 90 years old."

II. **The Missionaries at Lystra.** — Vs. 6–18. LYSTRA was the chief city of another region, that of Lycaonia, interpreted traditionally as *Wolf-land* (the local legend derived it from Lycaon, who had been transformed into a wolf), representing but too faithfully the character of the inhabitants. It was about eighteen miles south-southwest of Iconium, a Roman colony, and used the Latin language officially. — *Hastings' Bible Dictionary*. It was in a wilder and less civilized region than even that of Iconium and Antioch. The range of the Taurus cut it off from the more cultivated country of Cilicia and Pisidia. It is described as a dreary plain, bare of trees, destitute of fresh water, and with several salt lakes. So Ovid (*Met.* viii. 621 speaks of it, as the result of personal observation: —

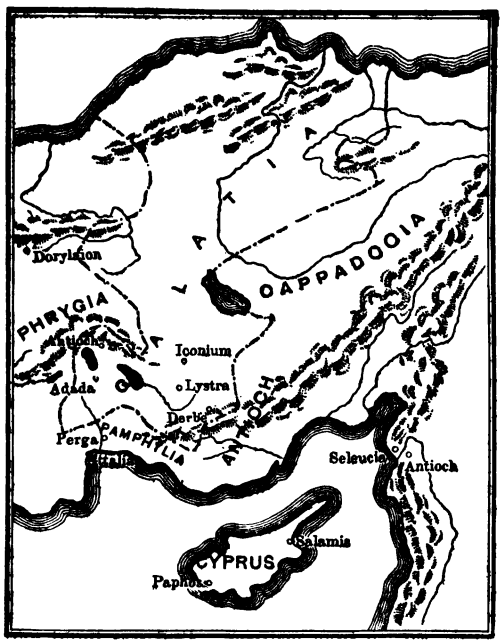
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8. [1] And there sat a certain man at Lys'tra, at Lys'tra there sat a certain man, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:

9. The same heard Paul speak: speaking: who, stedfastly beholding, fastening his eyes upon him, and [2] perceiving seeing that he hath faith to be healed, a made whole,

10. Said said with a loud voice, [3] Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped up and walked.

[1] Acts 3: 2.
[2] Matt. 8: 10.
[3] Isa. 35: 6.
a Or, *saved.*



The Countries Paul visited on his First and Second Journeys.

"Where men once dwelt a marshy lake is seen,
And coots and bitterns haunt the waters green."

There were few Jews here, as no mention is made of a synagogue. Here the missionaries preached the gospel, and Timothy was one of the converts.

THE LAME MAN CURED. After a time a miracle wrought by Paul was an object-lesson of the gospel, explaining and illustrating its truths and producing a deep impression.

8. And there sat a certain man in some company Paul was addressing. "We must suppose that Paul gathered groups of the Lystrans about him, and addressed them in places of public resort, as a modern missionary might address the natives of a Hindu village." On one of these occasions St. Paul observed a cripple (from Old English "creeple," *one who creeps*), who was earnestly listening to his discourse. He was seated on the ground, for he had an infirmity in his feet, and had never walked from the hour of his birth. He was "no mendicant pretender, but one whose history from infancy was well known," says Ramsay, who, from the Bezan Text, thinks he was a pagan who had previously been attracted to Judaism.

9. The same heard Paul, was listening to, was an habitual hearer. **Stedfastly beholding him.** "Fastening his eyes upon him" (ἀτενίσας). **Perceiving that he had faith to be healed.** The lame man had faith in Christ as a Saviour, and as one able and willing to do for him everything that was wise and best, though he may not have expected to be healed. He had such faith that it would do his soul good to have his body healed. His whole nature would be brought nearer to Jesus. The cure would indorse Paul's message as from God, express the healing and helpful nature of Christianity, and call attention to the gospel.

10. Said with a loud voice, to attract the lame man's attention as well as that of the audience, and by the voice, expressing in its tones "heart, blood, fire, music, life," he inspired courage and faith in the man. **Stand upright on thy feet.** To say this publicly required great faith in Paul. To do it required strong faith in the lame man. **And he leaped and walked.** A public proof that the cure was instantaneous and complete. "He sprang up with a bound (aorist), and then continued to walk (imperfect) with restored vigor." — *Rendall.*

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11. And when the multitudes (people) saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices (voice), saying in the speech of Lyc-a-ō'nĭ-a, [1] The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.

[1] Acts 8: 10.

THE APOSTLES LOOKED UPON AS GODS. 11. **Lifted up their voices** (shouted, with a sudden outburst) **saying in the speech of Lycaonia.** What that language was is unknown. The apostles probably preached in Greek, though Paul of Tarsus may not have been wholly ignorant of the Lycaonian dialect. — *Rendall.* Canon Tristram says, "They had partly understood Paul when he addressed them in Greek, as a gathering of Welshmen might understand English, but they expressed their own excitement in their native dialect." **The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.** "The knowledge of the story of Baucis and Philemon, according to which Jupiter and Mercury visited in human form the neighboring district, would render such words quite natural." — *Knowling.*

The statue of Jupiter stood before the gate of Lystra, and Ewald suggests that the legend of the appearance of the gods, somewhat as related below, was recited year by year at the great festival in this temple; "and thus the credulous people readily supposed the gods they worshiped, and who they fancied loved their land with a peculiar love, had visited once more the scenes of their former wandering." The idea of the gods coming down and appearing in the form of men was made familiar by the frequent stories in their mythology. "They spake, acted, loved, cheated like men." Homer, for example, is full of such incidents. Thus, when Ulysses lands upon his native shore, Pallas meets him

"in the shape
Of a young shepherd delicately formed,
As are the sons of kings. A mantle lay
Upon her shoulder in rich folds; her feet
Shone in their sandals; in her hands she bore
A javelin." — *Odyssey XIII., 221–225.*

"Madman! what if he
Came down from heaven and were a god! The gods
Put on the form of strangers from afar,
And walk our towns in many different shapes.
To mark the good and evil deeds of men."
— *Odyssey XVII., 485 sq.*

THE STORY OF THE VISIT OF JUPITER AND MERCURY TO LYCAONIA. Told by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses*, bk. VIII., and charmingly related by Hawthorne in his *Tanglewood Tales*. These two divinities were walking through this wild region, for Lycaonia was a part of the ancient Phrygia. Nearly all the people refused to entertain the strangers, but ill-treated and ridiculed them. Finally, they came to the hut of the peasants, Baucis and Philemon, who gave them the best reception and welcome in their power.

"Here Jove with Hermes came; but in disguise
Of mortal men concealed their deities;
One laid aside his thunder, one his rod;
And many toilsome steps together trod;
For harbor at a thousand doors they knocked,
Not one of all the thousand but was locked;
At last a hospitable house they found,
A homely shed; the roof, not far from ground,
Was thatched, with reeds and straw together bound;
There Baucis and Philemon lived.
From lofty roofs the gods repulsed before,
Now stooping, entered through the little door,
The man (their hearty welcome first expressed)
A common settle drew for either guest."

The churlish neighbors were subsequently punished by a terrible flood which overwhelmed the surrounding country, while the hospitable, kindly couple were amazed to see their little hut transformed into a glorious temple, where they were appointed to be the chief ministers of worship.

"Their little shed, scarce large enough for two,
Seems from the ground increased, in height and bulk to grow.
A stately temple shoots within the skies;
The crotchets of their cot in columns rise;
The pavement polished marble they behold,
The gates with sculpture graced, the spires and tiles of gold."
— *Metamorphoses, bk. VIII., Dryden's Translation.*

PRACTICAL. 1. The exhortation in Hebrews (13: 2) to be "careful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares," is here again illustrated.

2. The thought of God coming down to man expresses a longing and a hope of human nature. "Like distorted and obscure reflections in muddy water, they give a blurred image of the great truth," says Maclaren. We need a God who is an ever-present help in time of need, and can sympathize with our human feelings. This has been realized and expressed

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12. And they called Bar'na-băs, [a] Jū'pĭ-ter; and Paul, [b] because he was the chief speaker.

13. Then the priest of Jū'pĭ-ter, which had his temple before the city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, [1] and would have done sacrifice with the people.

14. But when the apostles, Bar'na-băs and Paul, heard of it, [2] they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,

15. And saying, Sirs, [3] why do ye these things? [4] We also are men of like passions with you, and bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from [5] these vanities [6] unto the living God, [7] who made the heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:

16. [8] Who in times past suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways.

17. [9] Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and [10] gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

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[1] Dan. 2: 46.
[2] Matt. 26: 65.
[3] Acts 10: 26.
[4] Jas. 5: 17.
[5] 1 Sam. 12: 21; 1 Cor. 8: 4.
[6] 1 Thess. 1: 9.
[7] Gen. 1: 1; Psa. 33: 6.
[8] Psa. 81: 12; Acts 17: 30; 1 Pet. 4: 3.
[9] Acts 17: 27; Rom. 1: 20.
[10] Lev. 26: 4; Psa. 65: 10; Jer. 14: 22; Matt. 5: 45.
a Greek, *Zeus*.
b Greek, *Hermes*.

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to us in Jesus Christ, the son of God, who has come, not like Jupiter in the legends to act like sinful men, but to raise up men into the character and love of God.

12. They called Barnabas, Jupiter. Probably because he was the older and more imposing man. **And Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.** "Mercury" (Greek, *Hermes*) was the messenger and spokesman of the gods, and the god of eloquence. "He was always represented as vigorous and graceful." Perhaps a hint as to Paul's appearance. Paul writes to the Galatians (4: 14), (which name probably included this region), "Ye received me as an angel of God."

13. Jupiter. That is, the statue, or the temple containing the statue, **which was before,** outside of the city gates. **Brought oxen** (for sacrifice) **and garlands,** with which animals led to sacrifice were adorned. They were "in exultant haste" to honor the gods. **Unto the gates.** Probably of the city; but some think, of the temple (*Ramsay*); others, of the house where the apostles were lodging (*Cambridge Bible*). **Would have done sacrifice.** To honor the apostles, "and to turn the religious revival to their own ends."—*Knowling*.

14. The apostles . . . heard. They were in the house, or more probably about their missionary work in the city. **Rent their clothes.** As a visible expression of their sorrow and disapprobation. **Ran in** (εἰσεπήδησαν) to the crowd. But the better reading is, "sprang forth" (ἐξεπήδησαν), hastened away from their house, or the place where they were speaking.

PAUL'S ADDRESS. *Introduction.* **15. Men of like passions with you.** Of the same nature, with human body, subject to death, on your level, not in the rank of gods. *Argument.* But we **preach unto you** (εὐαγγελιζόμενοι), proclaim good tidings, the gospel, while we are preaching Jesus who brought the good news of the living God. He is no Jupiter, no idol, but the maker of **heaven, and earth, and the sea.** Therefore, **turn from these vanities,** who cannot help or save you; who are not worthy of your worship.

16. Who in times past suffered, permitted. For wise reasons he permitted men to see what they could and would do, and to become prepared to receive newer light. This is apparently in answer to the objection, Why did not God send the gospel before?

17. Nevertheless. During all this time God attracted men by his goodness toward them. The beautiful situation of the town, while near was a waterless and treeless plain, intensified the appreciation of God's goodness. That goodness was still attracting them to see his larger goodness in the gospel of Jesus, which was but the culmination of the goodness he had shown to them all their lives.

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18. And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they multitudes from had not done doing sacrifice unto them.

19. [1] And But there came thither certain Jews thither from An'tĭ-ŏch and I-cō'nĭ um; who and having persuaded the people, 2 and, having multitudes, they stoned Paul, drew him and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he had been was dead.

20. Howbeit, But as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came entered into the city: and on the next day morrow he departed went forth with Bar'na-băs to Der'be.

21. And when they had preached the gospel to that city, [3] and had taught made many disciples, they returned again to Lys'tra, and to to I-cō'nĭ-um, and to An'tĭ-ŏch,

22. Confirming confirming the souls of the disciples, and [4] exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that [5] we must through much tribulation through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.

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[1] Acts 13: 45.
[2] 2 Cor. 11: 25; 2 Tim. 3: 11.
[3] Matt. 28: 19.
[4] Acts 11: 23.
[5] Matt. 10: 38; 16: 24; Luke 22: 28; Rom. 8: 17; 2 Tim. 2: 11.

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18. **Scarce restrained they.** It was contrary to their gospel to preach themselves. Their business was to lead men to Christ and to God. They put away from themselves the temptation to honor which belonged to their master.

III. **The Missionaries leave Lystra for Derbe.** — Vs. 19–21. 19. **There came thither certain Jews from Antioch.** More than one hundred miles by road. This shows how intense was the opposition to the gospel as preached by Paul. The opposition aroused against a man is sometimes a proof of his power. Men do not stone dead trees for their fruit, or arm themselves against weak cowards, or grow excited over rose-water opponents. **Having stoned Paul.** This was by a mob. What a crowd of memories this must have brought to Paul when he remembered Stephen ten or eleven years before. Compare 2 Cor. 11: 25; Gal. 6: 17. **Supposing he had been dead.** The opponents of truth often think it dead, when it is only stunned, and will be restored and live longer than its opponents.

COMPARE the change in the feelings of the people of Malta toward Paul some years later. So it was with Christ; one day, "Hallelujahs," and within a week, "Crucify him." So in Browning's poem, "The Patriot," with whom at first

> "It was roses, roses all the way,
> With myrtle mixed in my path like mad:
> The house roofs seemed to heave and sway,
> The church spires flamed, such flags they had,
> A year ago this very day."

But in one year all was changed for neglect, and chains and stoning, and a possible scaffold.

20. The disciples, among whom may have been Timothy, tenderly cared for Paul. **He rose up, and came into the city.** The next day he left and went to Derbe, a two days' journey, according to Professor Ramsay, but his map makes it thirty-five miles. Derbe was the farthest limit of Paul's first missionary journey. How long he remained is uncertain. But he preached the gospel while he was there, and made many disciples.

IV. **Revisiting the Churches.** — Vs. 21, 22. Paul retraced his steps, and stopped at each of the three cities where churches were founded by him, in addition to the one at Derbe. The excitement had subsided in the places where he had been persecuted, for weeks and months had passed since then. And Paul seems to have devoted himself to the churches rather than to evangelizing the heathen. "Precautions of secrecy they doubtless took, and cheerfully faced the degrading necessity of guarded movements, and of entering cities, perhaps in disguise, perhaps only at late nightfall and early dawn. The Christians had early to learn those secret trysts and midnight gatherings and private watchwords by which alone they could elude the fury of their enemies. But the apostles accomplished their purpose. They made their way back in safety." — *Farrar.*

22. **Confirming the souls,** ἐπιστηρίζοντες, *to establish more, to render more firm*, as a tender shoot is confirmed into hard wood which can endure frosts and hard usage. **Exhorting them,** παρακαλοῦντες, *strengthened, comforted them* by his words. **Through much tribulation.** Our word "tribulation" is derived from the ancient threshing implement, by

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which good wheat is separated from chaff. They must expect trouble, but it will be a means of entering more fully into the spirit of the kingdom of heaven.

SEE the story of the best possible world, in *The Choir Boy of York Cathedral.*

V. **The Return to the Home Church at Antioch in Syria.** — The first missionary journey may have occupied three years. When this work was done Paul and Barnabas went back to Attalia on the coast, sailed to Antioch in Syria, the home church, and reported what the Lord had done through them. Here they remained a long time, renewing their own spirits, and inspiring the disciples at home. One of the best things in a long missionary life is the not infrequent return to the churches that sent out the missionaries, both for their own sake and that of the churches.

LESSON X. — June 8.

THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM. — Acts 15 : 22-33.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.*** — GAL. 5: 1.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

We come now to an EPOCH of great importance in the history of the church, the final settlement of a question which came near to splitting the church into factions, and on the decision of which depended the liberty of the whole Gentile church and its rapid extension throughout the world.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. About A. D. 50, as generally agreed. But McGiffert shortens all the dates and places it at 45, 46; Harnack and Blass in 47.

Place. Antioch in Syria, and Jerusalem.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

These can be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

The two reports.
The question at issue.
The Jewish side.
The Gentile side.
The decision.
Reasons for the prohibition.
Value of discussion.
Liberty, its value and its dangers.

PLACE IN THE HISTORY.

This epoch was the conclusion of a long process of preparation, as a lightning flash is the result of the long gathering of electricity in the clouds, and from the epoch emanated long line of consequences extending to the end of time. It may be represented to the scholars by lines meeting

THE SECTION

includes the whole chapter to v. 35 and Gal. 2.

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 30-32; Rom. 12: 10; Psa. 133.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: A Religious Controversy and how it was Settled.

I. THE SOURCES OF OUR KNOWLEDGE.

Acts and Galatians.

II. THE TWO DIVISIONS IN THE CHURCH.

How the difficulty became serious.

III. THE QUESTION AT ISSUE.

The Jewish side.
The Gentile side.

IV. FREE DISCUSSION.

The delegation sent.
The Jewish statement. Peter's experience.
Paul's and Barnabas' experience.
Question summed up by James.

V. THE PRINCIPLES ESTABLISHED (vs. 22-29).

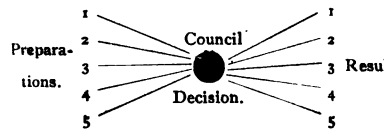
Return delegation. The letter.
Two groups of prohibitions.

VI. RECEPTION OF THE DECISION AT ANTIOCH (vs. 30-33).

VII. SOME MODERN APPLICATIONS.

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in a focus and then widening and extending on the other side.



1. Stephen.	1. Liberty.
2. Persecution.	2. Gentiles received.
3. Paul's conversion.	3. Broader religious life.
4. Cornelius.	4. Universal church.
5. Antioch church.	5. Unity and peace.

The sun of the *new era*, whose dawning rays we have seen growing brighter for ten years, has now fully risen above the horizon, and "his going forth is unto the end of the heaven."

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

Commentaries on Galatians as well as on Acts; Rendall on Acts, pp. 266–273 and appendix, pp. 357–359; Knowling, on chap. 15, and especially his additional note at close of the chapter, pp. 332–337; Ramsay's *St. Paul*, chap. 7; McGiffert's *Apostolic Age; Dangers of the Apostolic Age*, by Bishop Moorhouse (Fargie, Manchester, England, 1891); and the other books on that age and on Paul. Goodwin's *Harmony of the Life of Paul*, p. 51 (Am. Tract Soc.); Ramsay's *Paul the Traveler;* Dr. Lightfoot on Galatians, especially his note on "Paul and the Three"; Conybeare and Howson, chap. 7; Stalker's *St. Paul*.

I. **The Two Sources of our Knowledge of This Event.** — We have two accounts of this conference. One by Luke (Acts 15: 1–35), and the other by Paul himself in his Epistle to the Galatian churches (Gal. 2: 1–10). Some critics find a difficulty in reconciling the two accounts, but the opinion is almost unanimous among conservative and radical critics alike, that the two accounts describe the same event (except Professor Ramsay). "The discrepancy is only apparent, and disappears on careful scrutiny of the Greek text." "I recognize in the language of Paul a lively picture from the *interior* of the same council whose *external* history is recorded in Acts 15." — *Rendall.*

II. **The Two Divisions of the Church.** — The church had been in existence for about twenty years.

It had extended over Palestine, Phœnicia, Damascus, Antioch, Cyprus, and South Galatia in Asia Minor.

Its numbers had become quite large, and their influence is a positive force.

It included Jews, proselytes, Grecianized Jews, and Gentiles.

The disciples were naturally divided into two classes: 1. The Christian Jews of all kinds, and the Gentile proselytes who had become Jews, accepting their ritual and laws and hopes.

2. The Gentile Christians, who accepted Jesus as their Saviour, but refused to submit to the peculiar rites of Jewish life.

These two classes were separated by a great social and religious barrier built up from the Jewish training and expectations and promises, and from their law and ritual, intensified by their own interpretations, which prevented them from intimate association with the Gentiles. There was real danger of a permanent separation into two great parties, with a constant warfare between them.

HOW THE DIFFICULTY BECAME SERIOUS. "Communion with those whom every Jew had long regarded as unclean must have given serious offense to many pious Christians from the beginning. The truth is, the momentous consequences of the new departure were slow in manifesting themselves. For some years the mass of the church still belonged to the circumcision; and the Gentile Christians formed too insignificant a minority to excite religious jealousy, or threaten the exclusive ascendency of their Jewish brethren. The success of Paul's preaching first opened men's eyes to the magnificent future of the Gentile church. Then for the first time devout Gentiles pressed into the church in numbers that threatened to swamp the Jewish section." — *Rendall.*

The church at Antioch was the center of the Gentile party, and Jerusalem of the Judaizing party. Some of the Jewish Christians from Jerusalem, perhaps those sent by James (Gal. 2: 12), came down to Antioch, and when they saw the state of things they began to teach the strictest Jewish doctrine, contrary to Paul and Barnabas, and thus to create a sharp discussion and division in the church there, which would seriously interfere with the progress of the gospel.

III. **The Question at Issue.** — The burning question was WHETHER THE GENTILES MUST BECOME JEWISH PROSELYTES, AND SUBMIT TO THE JEWISH CEREMONIAL LAW IN ORDER TO BE SAVED.

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1. This did not involve that the Jews should give up their peculiar ceremonies, and cease to be Jews in order to be Christians.

2. It did involve the relation of the Gentile to the Jewish Christians, in their social life, and unity in partaking of the Lord's Supper.

3. It involved the relation of the Gentile Christians to the heathen people around them, and what they could present to them as the conditions of salvation.

4. It involved the true doctrine of salvation; what it is to be saved, and how to be saved.

5. It involved the unity of the church, and whether Christianity should be merely a Jewish sect, or a world-wide religion.

6. It involved the true interpretation of the promises of God to the Jews, of the prophecies of the Messiah, and the triumph of the kingdom of heaven.

THE JEWISH ANSWER AND ARGUMENT. The Jewish Christians insisted that the Gentile Christians must become Jewish proselytes in order to be saved and belong to the kingdom of God. 1. Because the Jews were the chosen people of God, their religion was given them by God himself, and they were the divinely instituted kingdom of God.

2. Jesus himself, the Son of God, the latest revelation from God, was a Jew, who kept the Jewish law, preached to the Jews, declared that not a jot or tittle of the law should fail till all was fulfilled.

3. All the promises of the Messiah, of the redemption of the world, of the enlargement of the kingdom of God, were made to the Jews. The forces of the Gentiles were to come to them; "The sons of the strangers shall build up thy walls"; "The nation and the kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish" (Isa. 60).

4. Again, there was a great social and religious barrier between Jews and Gentiles, which made it exceedingly difficult for them to live and work together as brethren in the same churches. The Gentiles must become Jews, or the Jews must break the divine commands. "The nearest parallel we can find to this barrier between the Jews and Gentiles is the institution of *caste* among the ancient populations of India."

5. Thus while the Gentiles could easily become Jews, and the Jewish Christians desired the Gentiles to be saved, yet the Antioch plan seemed to take away the foundations of their religion, of the Bible, of the kingdom of God, of the hope of the world. It was laxness, apostasy, unpatriotism, irreligion, an insult to their past history and to God.

THE GENTILE ANSWER AND ARGUMENT. Paul and the Gentile church stood on the negative; the Gentiles do not need to become Jews in order to be saved and belong to the kingdom of God.

1. The one condition the gospel laid down was faith in Jesus, producing a new heart and a new life.

2. Ceremonies and ritual may be helpful, and any one is at liberty to use them, but to make them essential to salvation, and require them of all disciples, was to subvert the central principle and power of the gospel.

3. It was to take away "the glorious liberty of the sons of God." The Jews had perfect liberty of action, and could, like Paul and the other apostles, keep the whole Jewish law. But the Gentiles, too, had liberty, and no one had a right to force any form or rite as essential to salvation.

4. The unnecessary burden of the Jewish ritual was a hindrance to the conversion of the Gentiles.

IV. **Free Discussion.** — The discussion was very warm at Antioch. Both sides were sure they were right. The word "dissension" is στάσεως, from ἵστημι, *to stand; a standing, a position, taken.* Hence, *a party taking a definite position*, different from others; hence, *a faction, discord, dissension;* elsewhere rendered *insurrection, sedition*, and *uproar* (Mark 15: 7; Luke 23: 19, 25; Acts 19: 40). Still, on all such questions, it is best to discuss and confer together in a Christian spirit, and with a desire to know the truth.

Not being able to settle the question among themselves, they wisely determined to send a strong delegation to the mother church, three hundred miles away. This was both wise and generous. The church in Jerusalem was the most conservative body, under the strongest Jewish influences, honored and respected by all; and its decision would carry great weight with the Jews all over the empire. At the same time they were older Christians; the apostles centered there who had personally known Jesus, and heard his teachings; and they had lived under the power of the Holy Spirit. Wise advice could therefore be expected there. Confidence in the righteousness of their cause was shown by the willingness of Paul and the Gentile Christians to go there for a decision of the vexed question.

The delegation consisted of the missionaries, Paul and Barnabas, and other leading men, among whom was Titus (Gal. 2: 1), a Gentile Christian, who would be a specimen of the

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22. Then it seemed good to (pleased it) the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose (send chosen) men out of their own company, and send them to An'tĭ-ŏch with Paul and Bar'na-bas; *namely*, Jū'das surnamed Bar'sa-bas, called Bar'sab-bas, and Sī'las, chief men among the brethren:

23. And they wrote *thus* (letters) by them after this manner: The apostles and the elder (elders and) brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gĕn'tiles in An'tĭ-ŏch and Syr'ĭ-a and Ci-lĭ'cia: greeting:

24. Forasmuch as we have heard that [2] certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls; saying, *Ye must* be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no *such* commandment;

25. It seemed good unto us, being assembled with (having come to) one accord, to choose out (send chosen) men and send them unto you with our beloved Bar'na-bas and Paul,

[1] Acts 1: 23. [2] V. 1; Gal. 2: 4; Tit. 1: 10.

converts among the Gentiles. He was of Greek origin, perhaps a native of Antioch, was afterwards a companion of Paul in his missionary journeys, and to him was written one of Paul's epistles. He must have been a man of considerable power.

On their arrival they received a hearty welcome from the whole Jerusalem church. The word "received" in v. 4 is ἀπεδέχθησαν, and implies a cordial welcome.—*Vincent, Knowling.*

Then began the discussion of the question before the apostles and elders.

FIRST. The Jewish side was presented by some of the Christian Pharisees.

SECOND. Then Peter gave his experience in relation to Cornelius. See Lesson III. and IV. Proving that God approved of the reception of the Gentiles, (1) by his converting them and purifying their hearts by faith; (2) by giving them the Holy Spirit in the same manner as he had bestowed it upon the Jews; (3) doubtless by Peter's telling them of his vision and the guidance of the Spirit. The conclusion was that the one condition of salvation was faith in Jesus, and the consequent new heart and life.

THIRD. Paul and Barnabas gave their experience during their missionary journey, how God had indorsed their course by working signs and wonders through them for the Gentiles. The greatest wonder of all was the great number who believed.

FOURTH. James, the brother of our Lord, and pastor, or leading person of the church in Jerusalem, and a very strict Jew, was convinced by the facts, and decided that Paul was right. He "added nothing" to Paul (Gal. 2: 6), that is, accepted Paul's teaching as to the Gentiles as correct, and added no further conditions, and laid on the Gentiles no other burdens.

V. **The Principles Established.** — Vs. 22–29. The decision was unanimous by not only **the apostles and elders**, but also by **the whole church**, who, v. 25, were "come to" (not, **assembled with**) **one accord**, had arrived at a unanimous conclusion. They sent a delegation and a letter. The letter stated clearly their decision; the delegation gave dignity and force to the letter, and confirmed the reports of Paul and Barnabas, so that there could be no possible feeling that the report was colored by their previous opinions. **Judas surnamed** (or called) **Barsabas**, son of Sabas or Sabbas. In Acts 1: 23 a Joseph Barsabas is named as the alternate with Matthias as a candidate for the apostleship in place of Judas. This Judas Barsabas may have been his brother, and hence one who had personally known Jesus. **Silas**, probably a shortened form of Silvanus. He became Paul's companion in his next missionary journey (v. 40). He is referred to in Acts 16: 19, 25, 29; 17: 4, 10, 14; 18: 5; 2 Cor. 1: 19; 1 Thes. 1: 1; 2 Thes. 1: 1; 1 Pet. 5: 12.

23. **Greeting,** χαίρειν, *rejoice, hail, welcome*, the usual Greek salutation. *Joy be with you.* Compare our "good-by" (good (=God) by=(be with you)) and "farewell."

24. **Certain which went out from us**, and therefore for whom we seem to be in a measure responsible, and whose teachings we would now correct. **Subverting,** ἀνασκευάζοντες, from ἀνά, *up*, and σκεῦος, *a utensil*; to *pack up utensils or baggage* in order to move to another place; hence, a general *overturning, dismantling* a house, plundering a town or field. A very expressive metaphor for the general upsetting and unsettling of the disciples' minds and consciences.

25. **Beloved Barnabas and Paul.** Thus showing to the Antioch church in what high esteem the Jerusalem church held these men.

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26. [1] Men men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jĕ'sus Christ.

27. We have sent therefore Jū'das and Sī'las, who shall also themselves also shall tell you the same things by word of mouth.

28. For it seemed good to the Hō'ly Ghōst, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;

29. [2] That that ye abstain from meats offered things sacrificed to idols, and [3] from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves, ye it shall do be well. with you. Fare ye well.

[1] Acts 13: 50; 1 Cor. 15: 30. [2] V. 20; Acts 21: 25. [3] Lev. 17: 14.

28. **It seemed good to the Holy Ghost**, who, by what he had done for the Gentiles by apostles who were filled with the Holy Spirit, showed as plainly as actions could speak, what the divine will was. The decision was not merely man's opinion, but was inspired by God. **And to us** who accepted the result thus inspired, and were heartily convinced that it was right. What could convince them ought to convince and satisfy the church everywhere. **These necessary things**, not necessarily as conditions of salvation, but necessary for right conduct toward the heathen, and necessary for the unity and mutual intercourse of Jews and Gentiles.

29. **That ye abstain from.** Here follow four particulars. They imply: —

1. That salvation is not dependent on forms of any kind, but on a living faith in Jesus that produces a new life.

2. That the Jewish Christians would yield everything possible for the sake of the unity of the church, and take away every possible barrier between Jewish and Gentile Christians as to mutual intercourse.

3. That the Gentiles should also deny themselves, and in courtesy give up something in view of the position and legal customs of the Jews. The prohibitions answer the questions. "How the Gentiles could be received into the brotherhood of Christ with the least possible disturbance of his every-day life in the busy world, with the least possible shock to the prejudices of those Jews with whom he would come in contact, due regard being had, on the one hand, to the pure life commanded by Jesus, and, on the other, to that love and mutual forbearance which are the spirit of Christianity." — *Schaff.*

FIRST GROUP. Abstain (1) **from meats offered to idols.**
(2) **from fornication.**

The eating of meats offered to idols meant far more than merely eating at home meat sold in the markets that had been a part of the sacrifices to idols. "The inspired framers of these primitive decrees well knew that 'an idol was nothing in the world, and that there was none other God but one;' but they knew, too, that the idol-worship of the first century of our era, the age in which they lived, poisoned the whole life of society in Greece, in Italy, in the East." Licentiousness "was associated with much of the current idol-worship of the day," which "glorified sexual vice with the halo of a sacred sanction." — *Schaff.* Lecky, in his *History of European Morals*, says that courtesans were the priestesses of the temple of Venus, and that many leading cities were made famous for the schools of vice which grew up under the shadow of the temples (chap. 5). See Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, chap. 4. "St. Paul (in 1 Cor. 6: 15 and 1 Thes. 4: 3) shows us the terrible risks to which Christian morality was exposed, risks enhanced by the fact that the heathen view of impurity was so lax throughout the Roman Empire. Consult Horace's *Satires* 1: 2, 31; Terence's *Adelphi* 1: 2, 21; Cicero's *Pro Cælio* 20." — *Knowling.* "Not even Socrates, the best of all heathen teachers, forbade it." "The heart of the Roman Empire under the Cesars was a pen of stagnant waters." "It was Rome at the epoch of her most gorgeous gluttonies and her most gilded rottenness." — *Farrar.* On the other hand, the Levitical law was very strict. This group set forth principles which were binding always.

The SECOND GROUP included (1) abstaining from meat offered to idols, so far as sanctioning idol-worship;
(2) refraining from eating the blood of animals;
and (3) from eating things strangled, in which case whoever ate such meat must eat the blood of the animal.

Blood was forbidden to the Jews by the Levitical law (Lev. 3: 17; 17: 10–14),

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30. So they, when they were dismissed, they came down to An'tĭ-ŏch; and when they had having gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle:
31. Which And when they had read it, they rejoiced for the [a] consolation.
32. And Jū'das and Sī'las, being prophets also themselves, themselves also prophets, [1 b] exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them. them.
33. And after they had tarried there a space, spent some time there, they were let go dismissed in peace from the brethren unto the apostles. those that had sent them forth.

[1] Acts 14: 22.
[a] 1 Cor. 16: 11.

a Or, *exhortation.*
b Or, *comforted.*

because blood was the life, the sacred symbol of sacrifice, and of purification from sin. "Without the shedding of blood there was no remission" (Heb. 9: 22). The blood of the sacrificed animal was the symbol pointing to the blood of Jesus shed on the cross for the remission of sin. But among the Gentiles it was, in various forms, a delicacy; they were "accustomed to drink blood mingled with wine at their sacrifices." Therefore, in churches composed of both Jews and Gentiles, social and brotherly intercourse would be impossible unless the latter abstained from it also.

COMPARE Homer's *Odyssey* XVIII., 44, etc.

These prohibitions were temporary, intended to meet the necessities of Christian intercourse at the time. But the principle of courtesy, of denying self for the good of others, of yielding the unessential to the weakness or even prejudices of others, — this is eternal. Finally, the Gentiles were requested to remember the poor at Jerusalem as they had already done. Thus they would prove their kindly feeling and the unity of love.

VI. **The Reception of the Decision at Antioch.** — Vs. 30–33. The decision and the letter were given to a great assembly of the church at Antioch. **31. They rejoiced for the consolation.** Encouragement, παρακλήσει. The word "exhorted" in v. 32 is from the same root. See First Quarter, Lesson VI. The report encouraged, strengthened, comforted them. Their consciences were now at rest, agreeing with their reason.

VII. **Some Modern Applications.** — 1. God guides by his Holy Spirit his children into the truth, through the needs of the times, through a clearer understanding of the Scriptures, and through free and loving discussion.

2. Missionaries can do the most good by returning every few years to visit the home church. The churches need to hear the report of their work from the actors themselves,

> "Rich in experience that angels might covet,
> Rich in a faith that has grown with the years."

The foreign workers need to come in contact with home influences, to gain fresh impulses, to keep in harmony with church progress and methods. They need it for bodily health, as a preventive rather than a cure; but still more for mental and moral stimulus. "It is twice blessed. It blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

3. Honest differences of opinion on important questions are sure to arise among good men, and in the best churches, when each party feels sure that it is right, and that its view is of vital importance to the kingdom of God. Seldom in the churches has there arisen a more important and more surpassingly difficult question than that which arose in the early church and which we have been studying. This fact and the fact that it was settled and the way in which it was settled are full of encouragement and instruction for us.

ILLUSTRATION. The Fable of the Shield, made of gold on one side and silver on the other, and the two knights riding toward it from opposite directions, and fighting long and hard because one insisted that the shield was gold, and the other knew that it was silver.

ILLUSTRATION. In Bulwer's *Pilgrims of the Rhine* there is a story or apologue called the "Tour of the Virtues." The Virtues, "getting tired of living forever with the Bishop of Norwich, resolved to make an excursion from Westminster Bridge to Richmond. On the way the Virtues got to quarreling over practical matters that came up, Courage with Prudence; Charity with Justice; Hospitality with Temperance and Economy; Ambition with Modesty; Generosity with Economy. Each one tells her own experience." Doubtless the Virtues by this journey were made broader, and found that under the wide canopy of Love there was a place for each; and thereafter they dwelt in Peace.

4. Notice the gradual preparation through a series of years for the final settlement. It was not a lightning flash from a clear sky, nor a sudden earthquake shock. Almost all

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changes of opinion come about in this gradual way, and not by sudden revolutions which would bring disaster. The slow settling or rising of continents, still going on almost imperceptibly, produces far greater effects than the most destructive earthquakes.

ILLUSTRATION. "If with one effort you should raise a tree twenty feet high, so as to make it forty feet high, you would not do more violence to its roots than you do to society, when you attempt suddenly to elevate it above its former level." — *H. W. Beecher.*

ILLUSTRATION. "If there were a hundred violins together, all playing below concert pitch, and I should take a real Cremona, and with the hand of a Paganini should bring it strongly up to the true key, and then should sweep my bow across it like a storm, and make it sound forth clear and resonant, what a demoniac jargon would the rest of the playing seem! Yet the other musicians would be enraged at me. They would think all the discord was mine." — *H. W. Beecher.* It would take time to bring the hundred violins up to the true key. But when it was done, all would rejoice. We see God's gentle power in awakening, enlightening, renewing, reviving,

"Silently, like morning light,
Putting mists and chills to flight."

5. Free discussion in a loving, Christian spirit, and examination of the facts, a tracing of divine providence, an enlightened study of the Bible, with minds open to the Holy Spirit of truth, will lead to peace, to clearer views of truth, to broader vision, to sweeter and more perfect harmony. Christian discussion is a sign of life.

ILLUSTRATION. To refuse discussion is like sitting on the safety valve of a steam boiler. It will result in explosion and destruction. Powder burned loose on the rock in the open air makes a great blaze and smoke, but does little harm. That powder confined in a rock produces an earthquake. Whatever church or nation attempts to prevent free thought and free discussion is living on a volcano.

6. Heresies and false doctrines occasion the true doctrine to be more carefully discussed, to cast off imperfections, and to stand out clearer and brighter than ever. This has been the result of the great doctrinal conflicts in the church.

ILLUSTRATIONS. "Old religious factions are volcanoes burned out. On the lava and ashes and squalid scoriæ of old eruptions grow the peaceful olive, the cheering vine, and the sustaining corn." — *Edmund Burke.* "So far, indeed, as they retain the bitterness, the fire and brimstone of personal rancour and malignity, they are, and they will be to the end of time, the most barren and profitless of all the works of man. But if this can be eliminated or corrected, it is undeniable, not only that truths of various kinds take root and spring up in the soil thus formed, but that there is a fruitful and useful result produced by the contemplation of the transitory character of the volcanic eruptions which once seemed to shake the world." — *Dean Stanley.*

7. Note the kindly spirit in which the discussion was carried on. Distinguish between peacemakers and compromisers.

Thomas Hooker, Hartford's first minister, wrote these wise words, which it is well to repeat: —

"If men would be tender and careful to keep off offensive expressions they might keep some distance in opinion without hazard to truth or love."

ILLUSTRATION. "When pride and passion meet on both sides, it cannot but be that a fire will be kindled. When hard flints strike together, the sparks will fly about; but a soft, mild spirit is a great preserver of peace, and kills the power of contests as wool-packs deaden the force of bullets." — *Leighton.*

ILLUSTRATION. In Spottsylvania, Va., in 1863, two armies were encamped on the opposite banks of the Rappahannock, and towards night the bands played. By common consent the picket firing ceased. The Northern band played the "Star-Spangled Banner" and "Hail Columbia," and the Northern army cheered. Then the Southern band played "Dixie" and "Bonny Blue Flag," or "My Maryland," and the Southern troops cheered. At last one band struck up "Home Sweet Home," then the other joined with them, and both played together, while all the troops, North and South, cheered in unison. So all divisions of the church, when they hear the music of their heavenly home, and feel the power of one Lord, one hope, one work, leave their differences, and join in the one anthem of the redeemed, "Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

8. We learn what is right in action by what the Holy Spirit uses and blesses, judging not by the incidental things which may be wrong, but by that which the Holy Spirit really blesses, and to which he gives his indorsement, in spite of incidental and temporary errors.

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9. Some things in form and method in the church are temporary, and will pass away, as some of the Jewish interpretations of the Scripture prophecies concerning the Messiah; and, as some of our later interpretations. But the essential truths will remain.

10. While we are to adhere strenuously to principle, yet we are also to insist as strenuously for religious liberty of thought and conscience for ourselves and for others.

"The struggle for Gentile freedom waged by St. Paul is typical of the battle for freedom of conscience, for freedom of knowledge, for human rights, and of every other battle against tyranny and wrong which the world has ever seen." — *Professor Stokes.* Few errors do as much harm as tyranny. Liberty is as rigidly to be demanded for conservatism as for newer and more radical views. Some temporary evils arise from it, but a thousand worse ones from attempting to suppress it.

"In necessariis unitas;
In dubiis libertas;
In omnibus caritas."

"In essentials unity;
In non-essentials liberty;
In all things charity."
— *Rupertus Meldenius.*

ILLUSTRATION. The freedom given to men by Christ is illustrated by the drama of William Tell, where Tell is represented as overtaken in the mountains by a furious storm, and saying, —

"I thought of other lands whose storms
Are summer flaws to those of mine and just
Have wished me there: the thought that mine was free
Has checked that wish: and I have raised my head,
And cried in thraldom to that furious wind,
'*Blow on! this is the land of liberty!*'"

So the Christian dwells in the land of liberty, and he can say to every impulse and desire of his renewed heart, "Blow on! this is the land of liberty."

LESSON XI. — June 15.

PAUL CROSSES TO EUROPE. — Acts 16: 6–15.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***Thou shalt be his witness unto all men.*** — ACTS 22: 15.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

A new epoch begins with this lesson. The gospel enters Europe. The first church in that country was founded. The little shoot grew up into a great tree overshadowing all that ever grew in the Orient. The small brook that became a broad river of life. Dr. Stalker says, "In its issues it far outrivaled the expedition of Alexander the Great when he carried the arms and civilization of Greece into the heart of Asia, or that of Cesar when he landed on the shores of Britain, or even the voyage of Columbus when he discovered a new world."

The map is very important here to a clear understanding of this lesson.

PRONUNCIATIONS.

Bĭthyn′ĭă, Cĭlĭ′cĭă, Cŏlŏs′sĕ, Dĕr′bĕ, Gălā′tĭă, Ĭcō′nĭŭm, Lys′tră, Lyd′ĭă, Mys′ĭă, Măcĕdō′nĭă, Nĕăp′ŏlĭs, Phĭlĭp′pi, Phryg′ĭă, Săm′ŏthrā′cē, Săm′ŏthrā′cĭă, Thyătī′ră, Tĭmō′thĕŭs, Trō′ăs.

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 9, 10; Rom. 10: 14, 15.

THE SECTION

includes Acts 15: 35-41; 16: 1–15, with a reading of the Epistle to the Philippians, which throws light on Paul's work there.

The Missionaries. — Instead of one company there were two: (1) Barnabas and Mark, who began their work in Cyprus. (2) Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke.

The "we" passages begin with v. 10 and indicate that the author of the Acts was one of the party.

PLACE IN THE HISTORY.

The beginning of the second missionary tour. The gospel enters Europe.

Rulers. — Claudius, emperor of Rome. Cumanus, governor of Judea, succeeded during the year by Felix. The Britons of England are finally conquered by the Romans (A. D. 50), as described by Tacitus.

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HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. The second missionary journey began in A. D. 51, and continued three or four years.

Place. Antioch of Syria, Asia Minor, Macedonia in Europe, especially Philippi, memorable as the place where was fought the decisive battle between Brutus and Cassius, on the one hand, and Octavius and Antony on the other, B. C. 42.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: The Call to New Work.

I. PLANNING FOR THE SECOND MISSIONARY TOUR.
The two gospel streams.
The new missionaries.

II. PAUL REVISITS THE CHURCHES OF ASIA MINOR.
Timothy Two results.

III. THE CALL TO A WIDER FIELD (vs. 6–10).
The divine guidance.
The man of Macedonia

IV. FOUNDING OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN EUROPE (vs. 11–15).
The voyage. Philippi.
The conversion of Lydia.
The small seed of a great tree.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

These can be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

The contention between Paul and Barnabas.
Silas, Timothy, Luke
The Macedonian call.
Divine guidance.
The conversion of Lydia.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

Ramsay's *St. Paul the Traveler*, chaps. 8 and 9, explains the Galatian travels, and the "we" passages, and Luke's joining Paul at this point. McGiffert on the "we" passages, of which we have here the first, differs from the commonly accepted opinions, pp. 236–239, 433–436. Goodwin's *Harmony of the Life of Paul* has an appendix on Paul's visions. On the women of Philippi, see Lightfoot's *Commentary on Philippians*. For a number of illustrations on the separation of Paul and Barnabas, see *Suggestive Illustrations* on the Acts, pp. 320–324. Bushnell's *Sermons for the New Life*, "Every Man's Life a Plan of God." *The Loom of Life* (35 cts., United Soc. of Christian Endeavor). Suetonius (*Augustus* 49) and Gibbon in the second chapter of his *History* describe the postal system and routes of the Roman Empire.

I. **Planning for the Second Missionary Tour.** — Acts 15: 35–41. After their return from the Jerusalem visit described in our last lesson, Paul and Barnabas remained some time in the Syrian Antioch. Then Paul proposed to Barnabas that they revisit the churches which they had founded in Asia Minor during their first missionary tour (A. D. 45–48). He would visit his spiritual children to see how they were growing in grace. He would look at the tender vines in the vineyard he had planted, to see what further care was required. These churches, so far separated from others, having received but a small portion of the truths of the gospel, exposed to temptations, to errors, and to dangers, had no small need of apostolic care and training. Barnabas was quite ready to go. But when they began to form their plans of campaign, a practical question arose. Barnabas wished to take with them his relative John Mark. But Paul was unwilling to risk taking with them as a helper one who had left them in the lurch in the midst of their first journey. Each one was so decided in his own judgment that they agreed to separate. They did not "part in anger." It was not "a bitter and angry quarrel." On the contrary, they seem to have separated as friends. Says Conybeare, "It is very likely that they made a deliberate and amicable arrangement to divide the region of their first mission between them." Paul mentions Barnabas with honor in his writings (1 Cor. 9: 6; Gal. 2: 1, 9). And Mark became so strong and noble a man that he regained the full confidence of Paul.

Thus the missionary work flowed in two streams instead of one.

BARNABAS AND MARK went to Cyprus. The results of their work are not recorded in the Acts, but are recorded in the great Book of Life, to be made known at some future day.

PAUL chose SILAS, who probably did not start with him from Antioch, but joined him in Asia Minor, at v. 4, where the plural "they" is first used. He was joined by TIMOTHY at Lystra, and later by LUKE at Troas, v. 10, where "we" is first used.

Paul and Barnabas were among the choicest saints the earth has ever known. But they were of very different natures, just as a flower, a fruit, a gold coin, a watch, a steam-engine, are all good, but in entirely different ways. Two parts of a tune, each one perfect of its kind, will make wonderful harmony if set to the same key, but the same perfect parts

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6. Now when they had gone throughout the region of Phryg'ĭ-a and the region of Ga-lā'tĭa, and were having been forbidden of the Hō'ly Ghōst to preach the word in A'sĭa;

bring only discord if set to different keys. I can conceive of two angels as working best in different spheres. This is the legitimate way in which different denominations arise, — one wishes to shout in meeting, another to be quiet; one loves to worship with a liturgy, another with words born of the occasion. All are right; but they must act separately in order to be in perfect harmony. It is only when they separate with wrong feelings, or oppose one another, and refuse to unite where union is possible, that there is sin. And more is done for the cause when thus there are different regiments and departments of service in the gospel army all working for one end, under one leader, with one spirit, in perfect harmony.

II. **Paul revisits the Churches of Asia Minor.** — Acts 15: 41; 16: 1–5. According to the best manuscripts accepted by the R. V., v. 34 of chap. 15 is omitted, and it is understood that Silas returned to Jerusalem before he went on the missionary tour with Paul. They were to meet in Asia Minor, as the narrative implies at v. 4, where "they" is first used. Paul therefore started alone from Antioch, by land along the road leading north, and then turning west to Tarsus. Here they struck the great Roman road through the Cilician gates, the pass through the Taurus mountains to Derbe and Lystra, and afterwards to Iconium and Antioch of Pisidia.

TIMOTHY, THE NEW HELPER. At Lystra Paul met a young man who became his life-long helper and friend.

Name. Timothy, "Timo-Theos," honored of God.

Birth. He was born, or at least was brought up at Lystra, perhaps A. D. 30, in which case he would be about 21 years old at this time.

Parentage. His father was a Greek, a Gentile, probably not even a proselyte, or Timothy would have been circumcised as a child; and yet he may have been a religious man like Cornelius, or the Capernaum centurion. His mother was a Jewess named "Eunice," and his grandmother was Lois (2 Tim. 1: 5).

Conversion. The tradition is that his father was dead at this time, from the curious addition of "widow" in Acts 16: 1, in one manuscript (compare 1 Tim. 5: 4, 5). Blass infers the same from the use of the past tense in v. 3, "was (had been) a Greek." The mother, grandmother, and Timothy were converted during Paul's first missionary tour (1 Tim. 1: 2). Timothy had been trained most carefully in the Jewish Scriptures (2 Tim. 1: 5).

The young man had made a good impression in his native city, both as to character and talents, and Paul asked him to go with him on his mission. The first thing he did was to circumcise him so that he would be a true Jew. The special interest in this fact is its connection with the decree just brought to the churches from Jerusalem, and Paul's own well-known opinions.

1. This was not contrary to these, for the decree was for Gentiles and not for Jews. The Jews had liberty to remain Jews, and the Gentiles liberty not to become Jews.

2. It was in accord with Paul's well-known opinions, for it was not done as a condition of salvation, and hence was a matter of indifference. "Neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5: 6).

3. It was in accordance with Paul's principle, "Unto the Jews I became as a Jew that I might gain the Jews" (1 Cor. 9: 20). Timothy, being the son of a Jewess, was regarded as a Jew. If he remained uncircumcised, he would be regarded as a renegade Jew, and an object of abhorrence to the Jews, and as such would be shut out from influencing them; and Paul, as his companion and defender, would also be greatly hindered in his work. The case was entirely different in the case of Titus (Gal. 2: 3).

TWO RESULTS of this tour were (1) increase in numbers, converts from the heathen population. (2) They confirmed and established the churches, both in faith and life. The process was something like that which goes on in the tender shoots of vines and other plants in the autumn, when they change into hard wood capable of enduring the winter's cold, and of bearing blossoms and fruit the next season. This was done by fresh teaching and larger truth; by Paul's own zeal and courage; by the assurance of the friendship of the brethren at Jerusalem and Antioch; by their Christian activities, and their success in winning souls to Christ.

III. **The Call to a Wider Field.** — Vs. 6–10. By this time Silas had joined Paul and Timothy. **6. Phrygia and the region of Galatia.** The better reading is that of the R. V. "the region of Phrygia and Galatia," that is, the Phrygo-Galatic country,

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7. After and when they were come to over against Mys'ia, they assayed to go into Bi-thyn'ĭ-a; but and the Spirit of Je'sus suffered them not;

8. And they and passing by Mys'ia, they [1] came down to Trō'ăs.

9. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood was a [2] man of Măc-e-dō'nĭ-a, and prayed standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Măc-e-dō'nĭ-a, and help us.

10. And after when he had seen the vision, immediately straightway we endeavoured sought to go forth [3] into Măc-e-dō'nĭ-a, assuredly gathering concluding that the Lord God had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

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[1] 2 Cor. 2: 12. [2] Acts 10: 30. [3] 2 Cor. 2: 13.

"ethnically Phrygian, and politically Galatian," that part of the Phrygian race which belonged to the Galatian province. — *Knowling, Ramsay, and many others. Galatia* is Gaulatia, the country of the Gauls or Kelts. **And were forbidden,** κωλυθέντες, *hindered, prevented, forbidden*, that is, hindered by a command. It is not said in what way they were forbidden, whether by inward monitions, by vision or other divine communication, or by some providence as a political disturbance. Very possibly the command came in more ways than one, each confirming the other. Compare Acts 8: 26; 10: 19; 13: 2; 22: 17–21. It is quite probable that it was their plan to go to Rome, and begin their work in Europe at the center of the empire, for Paul says in his letter to the Romans (15: 22, 23), written in A. D. 58, only six years later, that he had "been much hindered from coming to you," while he had had "a great desire these many years to come unto you." Rome was not then in a condition for Paul to begin his work there, for the Jews were expelled from Rome very soon after this (early in A. D. 52), and Paul, being a Jew, could not have remained there. Moreover, God had a much better way, as well as more fitting time, for Paul to go to Rome. **To preach the word in Asia.** They had now come within the province of Asia, the western province of Asia Minor, which included Mysia, Lydia, and Caria, and the cities Ephesus, Smyrna, and Sardis, and the others of the seven churches of Asia (*Hastings' Bible Dictionary*); but they were forbidden to preach there.

7. "They therefore kept to the north across Asian Phrygia with the intention of entering the adjoining province of Bithynia; but when **they were come to** (opposite) **Mysia,** and **assayed** (were attempting) **to go** out of Asia **into Bithynia,** the **Spirit** of Jesus **suffered them not.**" — *Ramsay.*

8. **And they passing by Mysia.** "Neglecting Mysia, that is, passing through it without preaching." They passed along Mysia, skirting it on the southern portion. "The words cannot mean 'passing by without entering.'" "Troas could not be reached without crossing Mysia." — *Knowling, Ramsay,* etc. **Came down to Troas.** A seaport in the same district as Homer's Troy, but farther south. On a later occasion Paul left his cloak, books, and parchments there (2 Tim. 4: 13).

9. **And a vision,** ὅραμα, *that which is seen, a sight divinely granted in an ecstasy or trance or sleep.* — *Thayer.* Luke never uses ὄναρ, the word for *dream.* Compare Joel 2: 28; Acts 2: 17; Luke 1: 22, Zacharias; Acts 10: 10, Peter; Acts 10: 3, Cornelius; Acts 18: 9; 22: 17; 27: 23; 2 Cor. 12: 2–10, Paul. **There stood a man of Macedonia,** recognized as from Macedonia by his dress (*Blass*), or by his words "come over," etc. Ramsay, as Renan, thinks it was a vision of Luke whom Paul had previously known, and whom in his vision he recognized as his old physician and acquaintance who had some connection with Philippi, and whom Paul had met before somewhere in his travels. It is plain from the "we" in v. 10 that Paul found Luke at Troas. — *St. Paul, pp. 200–204. Macedonia* lay to the north of Greece. Thessalonica was its capital. "It had numerous flourishing cities, of which Philippi, Thessalonica, Amphipolis, Apollonia, and Berea are mentioned in the Acts. It now constitutes a part of Turkey; and notwithstanding the oppression of the Turks, Christianity, though in a poor condition, exists to this day." — *Gloag.* **Prayed him.** "Beseeching him." **Come over into Macedonia, and help us.** "The form of the vision is striking. It does not come in the shape of a command from Christ, but in that of a petition from man." — *Maclaren.*

10. **Immediately we endeavoured** (sought means) **to go.** Paul's answer to the call was earnest and instant. **Assuredly gathering,** συμβιβάζοντες, *bringing, or putting together,* as for comparison; hence, *to examine,* as evidence, *to infer, to conclude,* from the

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11. Setting sail therefore loosing from Trō'ăs, we came with made a straight course to Sam-o-thra'cia, and the next day following to Ne-ăp'o-lis;

12. And and from thence to [1] Phi-lĭp'pī, which is the chief a city of that part of Măc-e-dō'nĭ-a, and a the first of the district, a Ro'man colony: and we were in that this city abiding tarrying certain days.

[1] Phil. 1: 1.

various and persistent intimations, by providence, the Holy Spirit, and visions, and the finding of a new helper in Luke the good physician.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS. 1. "This in many respects is the most remarkable paragraph in Acts." The divine action is introduced three times in four verses, on three distinct occasions, the guidance being manifested in three different ways for one purpose. — *Ramsay.*

2. As often to us there came to Paul a very difficult question to decide. "He felt the whole heathen world calling him, but he did not know where to begin." "All Europe lay before him, but Asia lay behind him unevangelized." "Should he go forward, or should he turn back and make another experiment." "It might well seem to him a step of doubtful expediency, to leave the better-known lands and peoples, and plunge into new and unfamiliar scenes." — *McGiffert.*

3. Light is thrown by this incident upon the way God calls us to our work for him, and guides us in our decisions as to duty. (1) A great need of something to be done. (2) Fitness and power to do that work. (3) The guiding hand of providence, hedging our way from other things. (4) The voice of the Holy Spirit, impressing our minds and guiding our judgments.

4. The figure of the Macedonian "embodies the unconscious cry of weary humanity, knowing certainly that it sorely needs help, but, alas! not knowing where is the help it needs. Neglected classes and peoples cry, with strong emphasis on the last word, 'Come and help *us*.' Men's needs are a legitimate argument with which to stir the church's zeal, though they are not the highest consideration. The true help for all sorrows of all men is to carry the gospel to them." — *Maclaren* in *Sunday-School Times.*

5. Compare the summoning of the Highland clans by means of the fiery cross in Scott's *Marmion:* —

> "When flits this cross from man to man,
> Vich Alpine's summons to his clan,
> Burst be the ear that fails to heed!
> Palsied the foot that shuns to speed!"

6. "In the light of eternity we shall see that what we desired would have been fatal to us, and that what we would have avoided was essential to our well-being."—*Fénelon.* The unexpected meeting of Luke the physician at Troas, giving Paul physical aid, a helper, and a writer concerning his missionary labors, may have prolonged Paul's life for his work, as it certainly helped to make his work and influence immortal.

IV. **Founding of the First Church in Europe.** — Vs. 11–15. THE "WE" SECTIONS, one beginning with v. 10, "are introduced for the definite purpose of marking the writer's presence with St. Paul." — *Knowling.* "They" is used again when the company leave Philippi; and the "we" section begins again at Philippi in Acts 20: 5, 6.

THE JOURNEY. 11. **Samothracia** was an island in the Ægean, on the Thracian coast, about sixty miles in an air-line from Troas, the highest point, except Mt. Athos, in this part of the Ægean, and a familiar landmark to sailors. **The next day to Neapolis.** "New city," the same word as "Naples." It was the seaport of Philippi, about seventy-five miles from Samothracia in an air-line. — *Century Atlas.* "With adverse winds and calms the voyage from Philippi to Troas takes five days (Acts 20: 6)." — *Knowling.*

PHILIPPI. 12. **Thence to Philippi.** About ten miles from Neapolis, on the river Gangites, named after Philip of Macedon, who built the city. Near it were famous old mines. It has long since disappeared. "The adjacent plain is memorable in Roman history as the place where the battle was fought between the Republicans under Brutus and the followers of Antony and Augustus. — *Hackett.* "And now a Jewish apostle came to the same place, to win a greater victory than that of Philippi, and to found a more durable empire than that of Augustus." — *Conybeare and Howson.* To the victory of Augustus, Philippi owed the honor of being a Roman **colony**, not in the ordinary sense of a modern colony, but one "settled with freedmen and soldiers, and organized as to government, laws,

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13. And on the sabbath (day) we went (out of the city forth without the gate) by a river side, where (prayer was wont to be made; we supposed there was a place of prayer;) and we sat down, and spake unto the women which (resorted thither. were come together.)

14. And a certain woman named Lyd'ï-a, a seller of purple, of the city of Thy-a-tï'ra (which one that) worshipped God, heard (us: us:) whose [1] heart the Lord opened, (that she attended to give heed) unto the things which were spoken (of by) Paul.

[1] Luke 24: 45.

and social customs on the model of imperial Rome." "It was a miniature likeness of the great Roman people." "They were governed by their own senate and magistrates." See Hastings' *Bible Dictionary* and *Mommsen*. **The chief city.** Either the first of the district, to which they came, or the leading city of that part of the district, not of the whole of Macedonia.

Compare Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*, act IV., scene 3, and act V., Brutus' vision of Cæsar's ghost; the battle of Philippi and the death of Brutus.

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS was written to the church, now founded in this city, by Paul when in prison at Rome (A. D. 62), about ten years after this his first visit to them.

THE CONVERSION OF LYDIA. **13. We went out of the city** gates. Probably there was no synagogue in the city. **Where prayer was wont** (accustomed) **to be made.** R. V., "Where we supposed there was a place of prayer." "Where there was, according to custom, a place of prayer." — *Wendt.* "That the river-side should be chosen as the place of resort was very natural for the purpose of the Levitical washings." See Juvenal's *Satires* III: 2; Josephus' *Antiquities* 14: 10, 23." — *Knowling.* Also for retirement. "The word προσευχή, *a place for prayer*, is well known as the designation of a slight and temporary structure, commonly circular, frequently open to the sky, erected for the purposes of Jewish worship," especially where there are not enough Jews for a regular synagogue. "A modern parallel, until quite recently, was the Protestant place of worship at Rome, which was compelled to be *outside* the city, beyond the Porta del Popolo." — *Prof. Isaac H. Hall.* **And spake unto the women which resorted thither.** "It is noticeable that in the three Macedonian towns, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, women are especially mentioned as influenced by the apostles' labors, and, as in the case of Lydia, the women of Philippi occupied a position of considerable freedom and social influence. See this picture fully borne out by the Macedonian inscriptions, which assign to women a higher social position in Macedonia than was the case, for instance, in Athens." — *Knowling.* See Ramsay's *St. Paul*, pp. 224, 227, 252.

14. **Named Lydia**, or a Lydian. Lydia was a common name among the Greeks and Romans. **A seller of purple.** "Either of the coloring matter, or, more likely, with the fabric already dyed. The purple color, so esteemed in the ancient world, included many tints." — *Schaff.* "Lydia was evidently a person of some means, as capital would be required for the trade in so costly a material. That large fortunes were often made by dyers, we learn from an old epigram in the Greek anthology, which may be translated: —

> "'Our dyer was poor, but by dint of his art
> He has dipped all his rags, and made himself smart.'"
> — *Canon Tristram* in *Sunday-School Times.*

"Lydia would thus be able to help Paul in his trial." — *Knowling.* **Of the city of Thyatira.** The city of Thyatira, on the confines of Lydia and Mysia, and one of the seven churches of Asia addressed in the Apocalypse, was celebrated in very early days for its purple dyes and purple fabrics. See Homer's *Iliad* IV., 141.

> "And as by Lydian or by Carian maid,
> The purple dye is on the ivory laid."

"Among the ancient inscriptions found at Thyatira are several relating to the guild of the dyers." — *Canon Tristram.* **Which worshipped God.** Who was truly religious, perhaps a Jewish proselyte. She was thus prepared for further light. "To him that hath shall be given." **Whose heart the Lord opened**; *i. e.*, in conformity with other passages (Matt. 11: 25 *sq.*; Luke 24: 45; 1 Cor. 3: 6, 7), enlightened, impressed by his Spirit, made willing. "Probably the opening was a process that had been going on for a long time. From day to day her heart longed more for God; from day to day her prayer rose more eagerly to the throne." — *Arnot.* From day to day she tried to do the Lord's

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15. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And [1] she constrained us.

[1] Gen. 19: 3; Luke 24: 29.

will. She used the means of grace. And as she climbed higher, the prospect widened. Her experience deepened, and many things came to her with new power and meaning. Her heart was opened to the truth as flowers to the gentle influences of the spring sun.

15. **And when she was baptized.** As soon as she believed, she made a public profession of her faith in the appointed way, — by baptism. There is not much depth to that faith and love which does not desire openly to confess our Lord and Saviour in the way of his own appointment. Primitive piety was not hidden piety. **And her household.** "Whether we are to understand by this term her children, her slaves, or the work-people engaged in the manual employment connected with her trade, or all these collectively, cannot easily be decided." — *Howson*. "We do not know whether she had children, or even was married." — *Plumptre*. **If ye have judged me to be faithful.** Then prove it, and reward me by coming **into my house**, making it their home. **She constrained us,** παρεβιάσατο, "*contrary to* (παρά) their apparent intention," she *used* (moral) *force* (βιάζω), the word used by Jesus when he said the kingdom of heaven is *taken by violence*, as it were, *carried by storm*.

SEE Uhlhorn's *Charity in the Early Church*, pp. 91, 325.

NOTE I. From how small a seed a great church grew; as it is said that "the big trees of California have the smallest seeds of any conifer." "How scornfully the great folk of Philippi would have smiled if they had been told that the chief title of their city to be remembered at all would be the presence in it of that one insignificant Jew, and his letter to the church founded on that morning." — *Maclaren*.

NOTE II. Lydia, the first convert, and beginning of the Christian work in Europe. Compare the growth of woman's work in the church, — the Women's Boards of Missions, the Women's Christian Temperance Unions, etc. "We are told of the Persian bird Juftak, which has only one wing. On the wingless side the male bird has a hook and the female a ring. When thus fastened together, and only when fastened together, they can fly. The human race is that Persian bird, the Juftak. When man and woman unite, they may soar skyward." — *Gail Hamilton*.

NOTE III. The quiet, gentle manner in which Lydia was born into the kingdom of heaven, in contrast with the other Philippian family, whose conversion is recorded in the same chapter. There are many ways to the one goal.

LESSON XII. — June 22.

TEMPERANCE LESSON. — Romans 13 : 8–14.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.*** — ROM. 13: 12.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

We change from Paul's entrance into Europe, our last lesson, to one of his Epistles, — that to the capital of Europe, — because there is a call for a Temperance Lesson.

The Positive Side. — These verses emphasize the great virtues and spiritual powers in the heart, the implanting and cultivation of which are the best safeguards against intemperance and the horde of evils in its train.

LEARN BY HEART.

All the lesson.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

These can be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

Love and the commandment.
Why intemperance tends to immorality.
In what ways intemperance works evil.
Why the young need to be especially on their guard
The armor of light.

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The Contrast. — At the same time it is a great help to see the evils and dangers of intemperance, as a warning against forbidden paths, and against those things which are the enemies of love and all its train of virtues.

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

Time of Writing. — Romans was written probably early in the spring of A. D. 58, soon after the Epistle to the Galatians. Nero was emperor at this time.

Place. — Written to the church at Rome from Corinth, at the close of the three months' residence there of Acts 20: 3, the "wintering" of 1 Cor. 16: 6.

Composition. — "It was composed, apparently, in the house of a Corinthian Christian, Gaius or Caius (Rom. 16: 23; see 1 Cor. 1: 14); dictated by St. Paul, and written down by one Tertius." — *Cambridge Bible.*

How it was sent. — By a Christian woman, a deaconess, named Phebe, who was about to sail from one of the ports of Corinth to Rome.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: The Armor of Light *versus* The Works of Darkness.

I. LOVE KEEPS THE COMMANDMENTS (vs. 8, 9).
   INTEMPERANCE TENDS TO BREAK THEM.
   Expert testimony. Illustration.

II. LOVE WORKS NO ILL (v. 10).
   INTEMPERANCE WORKS PERPETUAL ILL.
   Expert testimony.
   Deacon Giles' Distillery.

III. AWAKE, AWAKE (v. 11).
   INTEMPERANCE PUTS THE MORAL NATURE TO SLEEP.
   Special application to the young.

IV. THE ARMOR OF LIGHT *versus* THE WORKS OF DARKNESS (vs. 12–14).
   Applications. A problem.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

On Romans. — *Expositor's Greek Testament*, by Professor Denny; Abbott's *Illustrated Commentary; The American Commentary; Commentaries* by Professors Hodge, Godet, Beet.

On Temperance. — Professor Wells' *The Effective Temperance Committee;* Miss Belle M. Brain's *Weapons for Temperance Warfare;* Gustafson's *Foundation of Death.*

8. Owe no man (any thing, but anything, save) to love one another: for [1] he that loveth (another his neighbour) hath fulfilled the law.

9. For this, [2] Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, (Thou shalt not bear false witness,) Thou shalt not covet; and if (there be there be) any other commandment, it is (briefly comprehended summed up) in this (saying, word,) namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

[1] V. 10; Gal. 5: 14. [2] Ex. 20: 13; Matt. 19: 18. [3] Lev. 19: 18; Matt. 22: 39; Mark 12: 31.

I. **Love keeps the Commandments. Intemperance tends to break Them.** — Vs. 8, 9. **8. Owe no man any thing.** "This does not forbid contracts to pay at a future time, but a violation of the contract, or the violation of any obligation to pay when justly due. We must avail ourselves of no technicality of law to avoid what is equitably due." — *Whedon.* **But to love one another.** "The believer should keep no other debt in his life than that which a man can never discharge, the debt which is renewed and even grows in proportion as it is discharged, — that of loving. In fact, the task of love is infinite. The more active love is, the more it seeks its task to enlarge; for, inventive as it is, it is ever discovering new objects for its activity." — *Godet.* Leave no debt undischarged, except "the undying debt of love" (*Bengel*), "which you must always owe, because this alone holds the debtor even after it has been discharged." — *Augustine.* "He loves not truly who loves for the purpose of ceasing from loving." — *Philippi.* **He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.** The law expresses in words what is the natural fruit of true love in the heart. Perfect love would prompt exactly those actions which the law commands.

9. For this . . . and if there be any other commandment, etc. "If I love my friend, will I steal from him? No. Why not? Simply because I love him, and love forbids me to do so evil a thing. If I love him, will I envy him his good fortune? No. I will rather be glad that he is so prospered, and will wish that he may go on in the same

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10. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore I love is / love therefore is the fulfilling / fulfilment of the law.

[1] V. 8; Matt. 22: 40.

line. Love will lead me to rejoice with him when he rejoices, and not indulge in the spirit of envy. Envy implies dislike, or even hatred, which are the opposite of love. If I love my friend, will I run him down in my conversation about him with others? No; for that would harm him, and as love never harms, it would forbid me to talk in that way about him.

"Yes, if love were the rule in any village, the inhabitants of that place would live like true, loving brothers and sisters, and there would be there a kind of heaven below, because in heaven the law of love is universally obeyed. It is that which makes heaven heaven." — *Rev. A. F. Schauffler, D.D.*

Love thy neighbour as thyself. *In measure*, not as he always does, but as he ought to. *In manner*, after the same manner, freely, deeply, sincerely, tenderly, constantly, wisely, without end. The heart of love is a fountain of living waters, and the commandments are the channels through which the streams flow out. The commandments are the fences by the roadside which show love the way in which it should go.

See Leigh Hunt's poem, "Abou Ben Adhem." Miss Havergal's *Kept for the Master's Use.*

INTEMPERANCE, on the other hand, tends to make men break all the commandments.

It dulls the conscience. It destroys self-control.
It intensifies the passions. It distorts the vision.

EXPERT TESTIMONY. "Drunkenness is a flattering devil, a sweet poison, a pleasant sin, which whosoever hath, hath not himself; which whosoever doth commit, committeth not a single sin, but becomes the center and slave of all manner of sin." — *St. Augustine.*

"Your poorhouses are full, and your courts and prisons are filled with the victims of this infernal traffic, and your homes are full of sorrow, and the hearts of your wives and mothers; and yet the system is tolerated." — *Father Taylor.*

"Only a clear brain can think God's thoughts after him. Only a steady hand can glorify the divine Carpenter. Only a heart unhurried by artificial stimulants can be loyal in its love to Christ and humanity." — *Frances E. Willard.*

"As in Africa streams intersect the forest in every direction, so the gin-shop stands at every corner, with its River of the Water of Death flowing seventeen hours out of the twenty-four for the destruction of the people. A population sodden with drink, steeped in vice, eaten up by every social and physical malady, — these are the denizens of Darkest England." — *General Booth* in *Darkest England.*

ILLUSTRATION. "A story is current in the Orient of a wise old sheik, who gave to a young Arab prince, from whom he was about to part, a list of crimes, and bade him choose the one which seemed least harmful. The young prince turned in horror from murder, theft, and loss of virtue, and told the patriarch he would choose intemperance. 'You have chosen that,' said the wise old man, 'which will bring you all.'"

II. **Love works no Ill. Intemperance works Perpetual Ills.** — V. 10. **Love worketh no ill,** etc. "As love delights in the happiness of its object, it effectually prevents us from injuring those we love, and consequently leads us to fulfil all the law requires, because the law requires nothing which is not conducive to the best interests of our fellowmen." — *Dr. Hodge.* Many difficult practical questions as to how we should treat our neighbor are solved by the application of this measure and test. This love is the principle in the heart from which flows the Golden Rule in practice. He that possesses a heart of love, loving his neighbor as himself, will necessarily obey the second table of the law; for obedience to these laws is the natural fruit of such love.

THE ILLS WHICH INTEMPERANCE WORKS are without limit and without number.

EXPERT TESTIMONY. (From *Weapons for Temperance Warfare.*)

"Grape juice has killed more than grape shot." — *Spurgeon.*

"Inflaming wine, pernicious to mankind,
Unnerves the limbs and dulls the noble mind."
— *Homer.*

"We suffer more year by year from intemperance than from war, pestilence, and famine combined, — those three great scourges of the human family." — *Gladstone.*

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11. And (that, this) knowing the (time, season), that now (it is, it is) high time (for you) [1] to awake out of sleep: for now (is, is our) salvation nearer (to us) than when we (first) believed.

12. The night is far spent, (and) the day is at hand: [2] let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and [3] let us put on the armour of light.

[1] 1 Cor. 15: 34; Eph. 5: 14. [2] Eph. 5: 11. [3] Eph. 6: 13.

"There is a devil in every berry of the grape." — *Koran.*

"Oh, thou invincible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee — devil." — *Shakespeare.*

"Some by violent stroke shall die,
By fire, flood, famine; by intemperance more."
— *Milton.*

A terrible drama: *Act I.* Before the bar of the saloon. *Act II.* Before the bar of the court. *Act III.* Before the bar of the prison. *Act IV.* Before the bar of God.

ILLUSTRATION. DEACON GILES' DISTILLERY. The tract with this name, written by Rev. Dr. Cheever, is one of the most effective of temperance illustrations. It represents, as in a dream, that the workmen in Deacon Giles' Distillery suddenly left him, when a set of singular-looking fellows applied for work, and were permitted to run the distillery by night. They were very busy, and made a large quantity of rum. But they wrote on each barrel and cask invisible inscriptions, which remained invisible till the first glass was drawn, but then burned in flames of awful red. Most of the titles ran thus: "Consumption sold here. Inquire at Deacon Giles' Distillery." "Convulsions and Epilepsies. Inquire at A. Giles' Distillery." "Insanity and Murder. Inquire at Deacon Giles' Distillery." "Dropsy and Rheumatism, Putrid Fever, and Cholera in the collapse. Inquire at Amos Giles' Distillery." "Delirium Tremens. Inquire at Deacon Giles' Distillery." Some of the demons had even taken sentences from the Scriptures, and marked the hogsheads thus: "Who hath woe? Inquire at Deacon Giles' Distillery." "Who hath redness of eyes? Inquire at A. Giles' Distillery." Others had written sentences like the following: "A potion from the lake of fire and brimstone. Inquire at Deacon Giles' Distillery." All these inscriptions, burned when visible, a "still and awful red." One of the most terrible in its appearance was as follows: "Weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Inquire at Deacon Giles' Distillery."

In the course of the week these casks were sold, and as soon as the retailer began to draw from them, the invisible inscription flamed out on the cask, visible to every beholder. Rumseller and rumdrinker were affrighted at the truth thus read. One would have thought that the bare sight would have been enough to terrify every drunkard from his cups, and every trader from his dreadful traffic.

III. **Awake, Awake. Intemperance puts the Moral Nature to Sleep.** — Vs. 11, 12. **11. And that, knowing the time.** "The nature and character of the period in which we now live." — *Hodge.* This is interpreted by the clause, **for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.** They themselves were nearer the goal, nearer to Christ, nearer to their immortal inheritance than when they first became Christians; and their cause was nearer its triumph; the kingdom of God had made great progress. It was a time of warfare, a time of hope, with the goal and the crown in sight, a time for new zeal in the Lord's work, a time when every gift and every labor told on the result, a time of crisis and turning points. **It is high time to awake out of sleep.** Sleep is the condition of indifference, of unconsciousness of these great opportunities and inspirations. The sleeper does not know what is going on in the great world of realities, but is either dead to all these things, or has a dream world of his own in which he lives for the time. So Jonah was asleep and dreaming while the storm was raging about him.

12. The night, of past ignorance, of sin, of the kingdom of darkness, **is far spent, the day is at hand**, the day of the kingdom of God rising upon the world, the dawn of redemption for the world. Its rays tinge the clouds of the morning, and touch the mountain tops. The view "on the whole, to be preferred, is that which refers 'the night' to the season of pagan ignorance, immorality, and wretchedness, in which the Romans had formerly been living; and 'the day' to the season of Christian knowledge, purity, and happiness, which had begun to dawn upon them, and which was destined to grow brighter and brighter. We must remember that they were living in the transition period, when the light of Christianity was struggling successfully with the darkness of pagan idolatry." — *A. N. Arnold, D.D.*

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13. [1] Let us walk honestly, as in the day; [2] not in rioting revelling and drunkenness, [3] not in chambering and wantonness, [4] not in strife and envying. jealousy.

[1] Phil. 4: 8.
[2] Luke 21: 34.
[3] 1 Cor. 6: 9; Eph. 5: 5.
[4] Jas. 3: 14.

INTEMPERANCE dulls the moral nature. It puts the soul to sleep. It keeps men from the great invisible realities of life. It shuts their eyes to the dangers and evils of strong drink.

It is high time for the whole people to awake out of sleep on this subject, to realize the dangers to society, to arouse from lethargy, and work for the good cause. For the day of salvation from intemperance is nearer than when we first joined the ranks of the total abstinence army.

And the danger is especially near to the young and inexperienced. They do not realize the danger of forming the drink habit, or the evils that flow from it.

SPIDER HALL.

" Poor Master Fly, so young and small,
Why did you go to Spider Hall?

" The sun streamed down where the door stood wide,
With silken tapestries hung inside;
The pop of corks and the clink of glass
Make it hard for you, Fly, to pass.

" A band of crickets and gnats he had hired,
Who played loud valses and never tired;
He had laid the floor all velvety fine
With Persian lilac of scent divine.

" Your boon companions were strangely dumb,
Never a flutter, nor buzz, nor hum;
He had sucked them dry as a spider is able,
And set them upright around the table.

" The drug worked well and the luck went wry,
At last you struck him and gave him the lie. . . .
There's a gruesome cellar beneath that floor,
And the shriveled victims come out no more.

" But, poor Master Fly, so young, so small,
Why did you go to Spider Hall? "

— *Boston Journal.*

THE PLASTIC CLAY.

" I took a piece of plastic clay,
And idly fashioned it one day;
And as my fingers pressed it still,
It moved and yielded to my will.

" I came again when days were past —
The bit of clay was hard at last;
The form I gave it still it bore,
But I could change that form no more.

" I took a piece of living clay,
And gently formed it day by day;
And molded with my power and art
A young child's soft and yielding heart.

" I came again when years were gone —
It was a man I looked upon;
He still that early impress wore,
And I could change him never more."

IV. **The Armor of Light** *versus* **The Deeds of Darkness.** — Vs. 12–14. **Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness,** such as are described in the next verse, all the deeds of evil which hate the light, which are ashamed of their own faces in the light of righteousness, which darken the world wherever they rule, whose end is eternal darkness and despair. **And let us put on the armour of light.** The armor which belongs to those who live in and for the light, and are warring against the deeds of darkness. "In Eph. 6: 11, 13 we are exhorted to put on the panoply of God, the whole armor which God has provided for every part of the Christian's person, except his back; for, as Bunyan remarks, 'The Christian has no armor for his back.'" — *Dr. Arnold.* The Christian is never to turn his back upon the enemy and retreat. Like the Highland piper, he does not know how to play a retreat.

"THE SEPARATE PIECES of this armor are truth, righteousness, zealous but not passionate witness, faith which concerns the whole personality, hope which exalts, and God's Word. The first three pieces betoken the garments, the next two the defensive armor, the last the one only weapon of offense and attack adapted only for single-handed and close combat, which belongs to the Christian warrior, to the Christian assailed by the Evil One, and yet courageous and assured of victory. No one piece can be undervalued or neglected: each one requires the other; they together form one whole." — *Lange.*

The greatest battles ever fought are not those emblazoned by history, whose echoes resound "through the corridors of Time," but those fought on the silent battlefields of the heart. The sincerest martyrs have often been crucified on unseen crosses, and burned with invisible flames, and the grandest heroes have been those who have fought and gained the victory in the unseen battles with unseen foes, the principalities and powers of evil. Here the smallest child can be a hero and a conqueror, and wear a crown of glory.

13. **Let us walk** (live) **honestly,** becomingly, in a manner worthy of our vocation.

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14. But [1] put ye on the Lord Jē'sus Christ, and [2] make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof*.

[1] Gal. 3: 27; Eph. 4: 24. [2] Gal. 5: 16.

As in the day, in an open way which we are willing all should see and know, with nothing to be ashamed of, nothing to hide.

14. Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ. The putting on, or clothing ourselves with another person, "is a strong expression, denoting the complete assumption of the nature, etc., of another." — *Ellicott.* "The solemn deliberate act by which he identifies himself by faith with Christ." — *Denny.* "A clothing of the soul in the moral disposition and habits of Christ." — *Gifford.* **Make not provision,** etc. "We may provide for the flesh, but not for the exciting and gratifying of its lusts. We owe a duty to our bodies which, though the seat of unlawful desires, are yet consecrated to God as temples of his Spirit, and consequently we owe a duty to the flesh, the living material of which these bodies are composed. This passage, beginning with v. 11, was the means of awakening Augustine, and of his conversion from a dissolute to a holy life." See Augustine's *Confessions*, VIII., 12, 28, 29. — *Rev. D. B. Ford.*

WORKERS FOR TEMPERANCE need the armor of light, with no defense for the back, for they cannot turn their backs to the foe. Especially must all strife and envying be avoided, but self be lost in the great cause.

INTEMPERANCE puts off Christ and his character, and employs itself in making provision for the lusts of the flesh.

THE POWER that will overcome it is that of Christ. Temperance workers will succeed by putting on Christ, having his character, his teachings, his power.

THE DEVIL IN SOLUTION "seems a fanciful name to be given by so staid and practical a body of men as the notable English physicians to a substance in common use, but it has repeatedly been applied by several of them to alcohol." — *Julia Coleman.*

A PROBLEM. Add the number converted on the day of Pentecost (3000, Acts 2: 41) to the number of proverbs Solomon spoke (3000, 1 Kings 4: 32). Divide the sum by the number of furlongs Bethany was distant from Jerusalem (John 11: 18. 6000÷15=400). Add the number in Gideon's band (Judg. 7: 7. 400+300=700). Add the quotient of Methuselah's age divided by the number of Job's daughters (969÷3=323. 323+700 =1023). Subtract the number of the chapter of Proverbs containing the strongest warnings against intemperance (1023–23=1000). Multiply by the number of lords invited to Belshazzar's feast (Dan. 5: 1. 1000×1000), and you have the money value of the property destroyed during one year "by the failure of beer-drinking railroad engineers and switchmen," as stated in *Weapons for Temperance Warfare*, $1,000,000.

LESSON XIII. — June 29.

REVIEW.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.*** — LUKE 2: 32.

GENERAL REVIEW.

THE WORK. The development, enlargement, and broadening of the Christian church.

1. From the church in Jerusalem to Damascus, Samaria, Joppa, Cesarea, Antioch, Cyprus, Asia Minor, Europe.

2. From a Jewish church to proselytes, Roman Gentile officers, a church composed chiefly of Gentiles, Gentile churches. The larger unity of Gentiles and Jews together.

3. From a home church to a great missionary, world-wide church.

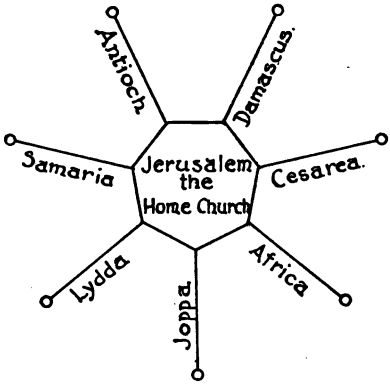
THE TIME. From A. D. 36 or 37, six or seven years after the resurrection of Christ, to A. D. 51, 52, when the first church was founded in Europe; a period of about fifteen years.

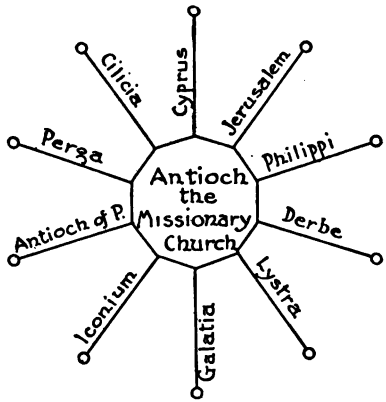
COUNTRIES. Judea, Samaria, Damascus, and Eastern Syria, Antioch and Western Syria, Cesarea, Cyprus, Cilicia, Galatia, and other parts of Asia Minor, and Macedonia in Europe.

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THE TWO CENTERS.

We find in this period two great Christian centers, from which radiate the history of the church during this period. These may be represented on paper by the class, or on the blackboard before the whole school, by simple diagrams.





A JOURNEY WITH ST. PAUL.

In *Tom Brown at Oxford*, the best scholar is represented as studying his Greek history by means of a map and pins with large heads made of differently colored sealing wax. The red-headed pin represented one army, the black another. And as the text described the movements of the armies, the pins were moved to the places designated on the map. During the late war several of us ministers did the same thing with the various armies. When news came of any change we marked it with the pins. This plan gives great vividness to the history and assists the memory. Suppose now that we have a large map on the wall. Prepare a pin with a large sealing-wax head for Paul, and smaller ones of different colors for the other missionaries. Take the initial letters of the principal places printed on cardboard, so as to be seen across the room, and with a pin fasten them in their proper places on the map as fast as the journey is made. Some scholar or class can tell where the next movement is to be made, and all the events or incidents clustering around each place can be noted or described. Pins with fliers of other colors may designate the places to which epistles were written, and still others the places from which they were written. Thus will the history given in the Acts be enacted before our eyes, and when all is done there will be a picture of the extent of the progress of the gospel during the first 33 years.

WORD PICTURES.

These can be combined with the use of the map, and the scenes described as we come to the different places, the persons named who take an active part in the scenes.

JERUSALEM. The trial of Stephen. Paul standing by. Persecutions. Paul sent out to Damascus. The apostles, especially James and Peter, Barnabas, Silas, Conservative Judaistic Christians, and what they did. The famine. The aid from Antioch. The return of the missionaries. The great conference.

DAMASCUS. Conversion of Paul. Ananias. Paul preaching. Paul let down from the wall in a basket.

LYDDA. Peter, Dorcas. The widows, showing the garments. Raised to life.

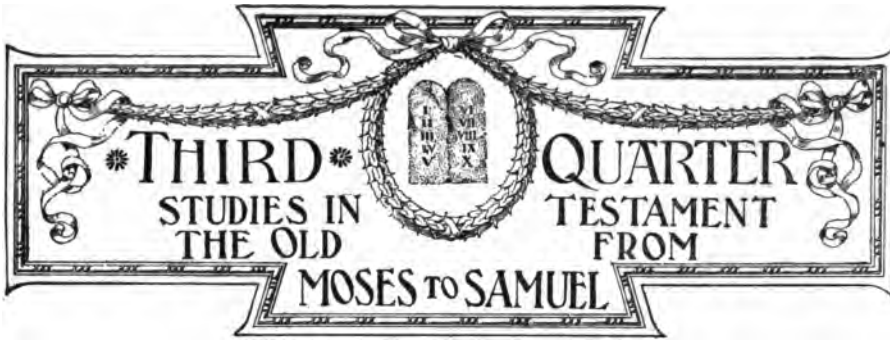
JOPPA. House of Simon the tanner. Peter. Prayer on the house-top. The vision. The coming of the messengers.

CESAREA. The centurion. His vision. The prayer-meeting at his house, the baptism, the Pentecostal scene.

ANTIOCH. The Gentile church. The great question between Jews and Gentiles. An introduction to Paul (the history of his life), to Barnabas, to Silas. The missionary prayer-meeting. Sending out the missionaries. The return.

So in the same way CYPRUS, ANTIOCH in Pisidia, ICONIUM, LYSTRA (with an introduction to Timothy), DERBE, GALATIA, PHILIPPI.

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FROM JULY 6 TO SEPTEMBER 28.

THE PENTATEUCH AND MODERN SCHOLARSHIP.

Around the whole of the Pentateuch has been waged, of recent years, a strenuous battle. Many modern critics have denied the unity of authorship, and some even declare it to be of post-exilic date. The more conservative scholars have, we believe, conclusively proved that the central portions of it, at least, were written by Moses, though the great lawgiver doubtless made use of documents still more ancient, and his work, doubtless, received editorial and explanatory touches from later hands. As to the entire accuracy of the book, which is the main point with which Christians are concerned, it has been strikingly confirmed by excavations and explorations in Egypt, Chaldea, and the desert, while nothing in the important and constant archæological discoveries of recent years tends to discredit it.

"Higher criticism," so far as it discloses new truth about God's Word, is to be received with gratitude. We will not follow those higher critics that draw hasty conclusions from unwarranted conjectures. But there are other higher critics, deeply reverent, profoundly cautious, and conservative, whose learning compels respect, and whose decisions are worthy of acceptance. In a volume such as the present it would be manifestly out of place to rehearse these scholastic discussions. The positive and undoubted results of recent study we have tried to embody in these notes; the points on which the best scholars themselves are not agreed, we have ignored. Whoever wishes to pursue the study into such technical details is referred to the following books: —

THE PENTATEUCH FROM THE CONSERVATIVE STANDPOINT. *The Higher Criticism and the Pentateuch*, by Professor Green ($1.50, Scribners); *The Pentateuch: Its Origin and Structure*, by Professor Bissell ($3.00, Scribners); *The Battle of the Standpoints*, by Professor Cave (20 cts., Eyre & Spottiswoode); *The Veracity of the Pentateuch*, by Pres. S. C. Bartlett ($1.50, Revell); *Introduction to the Pentateuch*, by Rev. R. Wheeler Bush (Religious Tract Society); *Moses and the Prophets*, by W. H. Green, D.D.; *Lex Mosaica, or the Law of Moses and the Higher Criticism*, edited by French (Eyre & Spottiswoode); *Book by Book*, in which the Pentateuch is treated by Robertson (Isbister).

THE PENTATEUCH VIEWED FROM THE MORE RADICAL STANDPOINT. *The Polychrome Bible* (Dodd & Mead); Rev. W. E. Addis' *Documents of the Hexateuch* (pt. 1., $3.00; pt. 2, $4.00, Putnams); Professor Driver's *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* ($2.50, Scribners); Dr. Lyman Abbott's *Lowell Lectures* in the winter of 1900 (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.); Prof. Robertson Smith's *The Old Testament and the Jewish Church* (Appleton & Co.); Rev. Dr. Washington Gladden's *Who Wrote the Bible?* (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.); *Hebrew Story from Creation to Exile*, by Professors Bartlett and Peters ($1.50, Putnams); *The International Critical Commentary* (Scribners); *The Triple Tradition of the Exodus*, by B. W. Bacon, D.D. ($2.50, Student Publishing Co.).

THE MONUMENTS. *The Monuments and the Old Testament*, by Prof. Ira M. Price ($1.25, Christian Culture Press); *Higher Critics and the Monuments*, by Prof. A. H. Sayce (Soc. for Promotion of Christian Knowledge); Professor Hommel's *Ancient Hebrew Tradition as Illustrated by the Monuments* ($1.75, E. and B. Young); *Recent Research in Bible Lands*, by Prof. H. V. Hilprecht (Wattles); *History, Prophecy, and the Monuments*, by Prof. J. F. McCurdy (2 vols., $6.00, Macmillan); Schrader's *Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Monuments* (2 vols., Williams & Norgate).

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GENERAL COMMENTARIES ON THE PENTATEUCH. *The People's Bible*, by Joseph Parker, D.D. (Funk & Wagnalls); *The Pulpit Commentary*, by Spence and Exell; *Gray's Biblical Museum*, by George M. Adams, D.D.; *The Speaker's Commentary; Commentary* by Lange; *The Bible Commentary*, by Cook (Scribners); Butler's *Bible Work* (Funk & Wagnalls); *The Sermon Bible* (Armstrong); *The Gospel of the Pentateuch*, by Charles Kingsley ($1.25, Macmillan); *Moses, the Lawgiver*, by William M. Taylor, D.D. ($1.50, Harper & Brothers); *Moses, a Biblical Study*, by J. J. Van Oosterzee, D.D. (Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark); *Moses, the Servant of God*, by Rev. F. B. Meyer ($1.00, Revell); *Moses, the Man of God*, by James Hamilton, D.D.

SPECIAL COMMENTARIES. EXODUS. *The Expositor's Bible*, by G. A. Chadwick, D.D. (especially helpful); *The Pulpit Bible; The Cambridge Bible; The Handy Commentary* (Rawlinson); Bush's *Notes;* Professor Moulton's admirable arrangement in *The Modern Reader's Bible* (50 cts., Macmillan); *Commentaries* by Murphy (Warren F. Draper); Alford (Isbister). LEVITICUS. S. H. Kellogg, D.D. in *The Expositor's Bible.* NUMBERS. Ellicott in *The Handy Commentary;* Watson in *The Expositor's Bible.* DEUTERONOMY. Professor Driver in *The International Critical Commentary.* Professor Moulton's suggestive arrangement in *The Modern Reader's Bible* (50 cts., Macmillan); Andrew Harper in *The Expositor's Bible.*

A PREVIEW OF THE QUARTER.

Previews are as necessary as reviews. Let us glance ahead over the coming quarter. Our studies cover the forty years in the wilderness, and exhibit God's education of the Israelites from a nation of slaves into a unified, strong people, ready to conquer the Promised Land. Therefore our title for the quarter is *Lessons in God's Training School.* We shall find that eleven fundamental lessons are taught: —

LESSONS.	INCIDENT.	TEACHING.
I.	The manna	*trust.*
II., III.	The Ten Commandments	*duty.*
IV.	The brazen calf	*obedience.*
V.	The tabernacle	*worship.*
VI.	Nadab and Abihu	*temperance.*
VII.	Hobab. The cloud	*progress.*
VIII.	Caleb and Joshua	*courage.*
IX.	The brazen serpent	*faith.*
X.	The warnings against idolatry	*purity.*
XI.	Moses' last exhortation	*faithfulness.*
XII.	Moses' Pisgah vision	*hope.*

There is reason in this order. Trust is always the first thing to be learned in God's school of life; hope is the glorious climax of the studies. Duty-doing and obedience must follow close on trust, and they are themselves impossible without worship. Temperance and purity, faith and faithfulness, progress and courage, are cognate studies. The crossing of the Red Sea was the entrance to the school; the crossing of the Jordan was Commencement Day; Moses' final exhortations were the Baccalaureate Sermon.



The teacher may well write these eleven lessons on a school slate, one by one as the weeks go by, and keep the slate hung before the class.

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LESSON I. — July 6.

THE GIVING OF MANNA. — Exodus 16 : 4–15.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Give us this day our daily bread.* — MATT. 6: 11.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Win Attention by asking the scholars, "Did you ever actually suffer from hunger?" Few really have. Then discuss the account of the murmuring of the Israelites in Ex. 16: 1–3.

Locate the Lesson in place and time by drawing a sketch map, showing the probable route from the point of crossing the Red Sea, marking Marah, Elim, and the place of the first fall of manna.

Get a Description of the desert (such as that in Stanley's *History of the Jewish Church*, vol. I., pp. 123–125), and have it read aloud.

Make a List, the scholars dictating, of the many reasons the Israelites had for trusting God, even in the desert.

Follow the Outline given below, in teaching the main lesson. Each scholar may write it on a pencil tablet as the lesson proceeds.

Combine with the lesson all the other references to manna in the Bible, as indicated in the following pages.

Close by reading Christ's comparison of himself to the manna, and by getting each scholar to name one point of likeness. Press upon the class this earnest question, "Is your life fed by the true Bread, or by the husks of worldliness?"

The Book of Exodus (see the Introduction) was written in Hebrew. It consists of two sections, chapters 1–18 dealing with the early years of Moses' life and the departure from Egypt, and chapters 19–40 telling about the giving of the law at Sinai.

THE SECTION.

Ex. 15: 22–16: 36; also, John 6: 26–59.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

Subjects to be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

A description of the desert from the Bible dictionary (with home-made map).
A description of the manna.
What the manna teaches us.
Why God worked a miracle for the Israelites.
Why the Israelites needed a Sabbath.
How God taught the Israelites to trust him.
The character of Moses, as shown in this incident.
How Christ is like the manna.

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 4, 5; John 6: 51; Deut. 8: 3.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. According to the common chronology, the passage of the Red Sea took place B. C. 1491; according to Brugsch, B. C. 1300; Price, 1276. They had started the fifteenth of Abib (the last of March or the first of April). Our lesson is a month later.

Place. The northern part of the Wilderness of Sin,* a long plain bordering the Gulf of Suez on the east. See the map.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: Trust, the First Lesson in God's Training School.

I. THE ISRAELITES IN GOD'S TRAINING SCHOOL. WHY THEY NEEDED A LESSON IN TRUST (vs. 1–3).

Marah and Elim.
Wilderness terrors.
The fleshpots of Egypt.

II. GOD'S ANSWER TO THE COMPLAINING PEOPLE (vs. 4, 5).

Manna promised.
The daily supply.
The provision for the Sabbath.

III. THE LESSON FROM MOSES. HE REBUKES THE ISRAELITES' COMPLAINTS (v. 6–8).

Forgetting what God has done.
Forgetting God's omnipresence.

IV. THE LESSON FROM THE CLOUD. GOD REBUKES HIS MURMURING PEOPLE (vs. 9–12).

The terrible flaming cloud.
The promise of the quails.
Knowing God as our God.

V. THE LESSON FROM THE MIRACLE. QUAILS AND MANNA (vs. 13–15).

God in nature.
God over nature.
Christ the heavenly Manna.

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THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

Chapter on "The Route of the Exodus" in Trumbull's *Kadesh-barnea* (Scribners); *The Desert of the Exodus*, by Palmer ($3.00, Harper and Brothers); chapter on "Typography of the Exodus" in Dawson's *Modern Science in Bible Lands* ($2.00, Harper and Brothers); "The Hunger and Thirst of the Wilderness," a chapter in Mrs. Whitney's *The Open Mystery* ($1.25, Houghton, Mifflin & Co.); three fine chapters in Chadwick's *Exodus; Moses the Lawgiver*, by Taylor ($1.50, Harper and Brothers); chapters 5, 6, and 7 in Stanley's *History of the Jewish Church* (Scribners); many *hymns*, such as "Day by Day the Manna Fell"; Mrs. Browning's sonnet, "Cheerfulness taught by Reason."

PRONUNCIATIONS.

Sinai (Sī′nă or Sī′năi), Sĭn, A′bĭb, Sūĕz′, Shŭr, Mā′răh, E′lĭm, A(a)′ron, Kĭb′rŏth-Hăttā′ăvăh, Pā′răn.

PICTURES.

The Israelites passing through the Red Sea, Raphael; *Moses and the Israelites after the Passage of the Red Sea*, Rosselli (Sistine Chapel, Rome); *The Life of Moses*, Botticelli (in the Sistine Chapel); photograph of Michael Angelo's *Moses; the Lord gives Manna to the People of Israel*, photograph of a scene in the Passion Play at Ober-Ammergau.



From a Photograph by Wilson.

The Great Wells of Elim.

I. **The Israelites in God's Training School. Why They needed a Lesson in Trust.** — Vs. 1–3. Our last lesson in the Old Testament, six months ago, left the Israelites at the northern end of the Gulf of Suez. They had crossed this arm of the Red Sea, at or near the present Suez. Then they proceeded southeastward toward Sinai, keeping close to the shores of the Red Sea. Three routes were possible (see map). (1) The Philistia road, the northern road, around the Mediterranean. This they avoided, because it would lead them through the warlike tribe of Philistines. (2) The "Way of Shur," directly east. They rejected this, because it traversed the worst of the desert. They chose, therefore, (3) the southerly route, toward Sinai.

The Israelites had now entered their training school, where they were to receive forty years of discipline. This training transformed them from a nation of two million slaves, weakened in spirit and body by two centuries of servitude, into a people strong and self-reliant enough to conquer Canaan. The story is one that is duplicated in the life of every man and nation that is led by God from sin and weakness into power for good; we shall find it full of instruction for ourselves.

Marah and Elim. The first month's journey lay near the Red Sea, and was not severe. Two incidents only are recorded (Ex. 15: 22–27). After three days of wilderness travel, they found they had used up their supplies of water. They had reached Marah (which means *bitter*), where the water was unfit to drink. Here God taught the Israelites their first lesson in trust, showing Moses a tree which he cast into the waters, and they became clear and healthful. Next they came to Elim, a beautiful oasis, with springs and fruitful palm trees. Here they pitched their tents and rested.

THE FIRST LESSONS. Marah has remained the type of sorrow, but of sorrow whose

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4. Then said the LORD unto Mō'ses, Behold, I will rain [1] bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate day's portion every day, that I may [2] prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.

[1] Psa. 78: 24; John 6: 31, 32. [2] Ex. 15: 25; Deut. 8: 2, 16.

bitter tears are comforted by God's love and human faith. Elim is the type of life's joys, the sweet that comes with every bitter; "the Palace Beautiful," as Chadwick says, "just beyond the lions, and the Delectable Mountains next after Doubting Castle." When we come to Marah in our life journeys, let us cast into the bitter waters the tree of our faith, and remember that God has Elims ahead, waiting for us.

THE LESSONS GROW HARDER. Turning eastward from the pleasanter neighborhood of the Red Sea, the Israelites entered upon the Wilderness of Sin, between the sea and Sinai. This was a most inhospitable region, dreary and desolate, though not yet free from the fear of Egyptian border garrisons. They had been thirty days away from Egypt, their food was almost exhausted, and no fresh supply was in sight. It was a severe test of their faith, and their faith failed, even with Marah vividly in mind. They fell to murmuring against Moses and Aaron, wished they had died in Egypt, and longed for its "fleshpots," or meat dishes. There is no reason for thinking that the Israelites had fared well in Egypt, even in the matter of food; but, as Bush says, "It is easy to overestimate the past when men are disposed to aggravate, to themselves or others, the hardships of their present lot."

Wilderness Terrors.

> "No sooner out, but grumble? Is the Brick
> So soone forgotten? 'Tis a common trick:
> Serve God in Plenty? Egypt can doe thus;
> No thanks to serve our God, when God serves us;
> Some sullen curres, when they perceive a Bone,
> Will wagg their Tayles and faune; But snarle, if none."
>
> — *Francis Quarles* (*b. 1592*).

APPLICATIONS AND ILLUSTRATIONS. Men still act much as these Israelites acted. God redeems us from our bondage, rescues us from our foes, leads us on our way, sweetens our Marahs, and provides for us many an Elim; but on the first approach of trouble we forget it all. We long for "the fleshpots of Egypt," the fancied delights of a life unrestrained by religion; or we wish we were dead, as the Israelites wished.

One way to conquer trouble is to look *backward*, not to the fleshpots, but to the miracles. Call to mind how good God has already been to you, and be sure he will be equally good in the future.

Another way is to look *forward*, not to the desert ahead, but beyond it, to the promised Canaan. The Bible is full of promises of joys, in this life as well as in heaven, to those who let God lead them.

A third way is to look *upward*, praying to a present God, always ready to answer prayer and help his children. A friend of mine was once wandering in a thick fog. He could not see a step behind or before, and his soul was filled with gloomy thoughts. Of a sudden he looked upward, and lo! the sky was visible, full of stars. He was walking through a thick fog that reached only a few feet above his head. So in all our troubles; we have only to look up, and we can see God's kindness through them.

II. **God's Answer to the Complaining People.** — Vs. 4, 5. Evidently this murmuring, faint-hearted people needed a lesson in trust, and therefore God made that the first lesson in his wilderness training school.

4. Then said the Lord unto Moses. God may have spoken audibly, or, just as really, by prompting his thoughts. **Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you.** The manna, called by name later. **And the people shall go out and gather.** The manna fell outside the camp (v. 14). **A certain rate** (day's portion) **every day.** If they gathered more than enough for a day, the extra portion became corrupt and useless (v. 20). **That I may prove them.** The test lay in their obedience to God's rules for manna gathering. So God used the one tree in the Garden of Eden to test Adam and Eve. **Whether they will walk in my law, or no.** God wanted their trust in him and their obedience to his laws to become as instinctive as walking.

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5. And it shall come to pass [that] on the sixth day, [that] they shall prepare [that] which they bring in; and [1] it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.

6. And Mō'ses and Aar'on said unto all the children of Is'ra-el, [2] At even, then ye shall know that the LORD hath brought you out from the land of E'gypt:

7. [And] in the morning, then ye shall see [3] the glory of the LORD; for that he heareth your murmurings against the LORD: and [4] what [are] we, that ye murmur against us?

8. And Mō'ses said, *This shall be*, when the LORD shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the LORD heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: and what [are] we? your murmurings [are] not against us, but [5] against the LORD.

[1] V. 22; Lev. 25: 21.
[2] Vs. 12, 13; Ex. 6: 7; Num. 16: 28.
[3] V. 10; Isa. 35: 2; John 11: 4, 40.
[4] Num. 16: 11.
[5] 1 Sam. 8: 7; Luke 10: 16; Rom. 13: 2.

Sabbath Trust.

5. On the sixth day . . . it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. They were to gather on Friday twice as much as usual, and God would miraculously preserve it over the Sabbath from the usual corruption.

GOD'S WAYS OF TEACHING TRUST. 1. He still sends us bread from heaven, literally. Every grain field, botanists tell us, gets the greater part of its growth, not from the soil, but from above, — from the air, sunshine, and rain.

2. But, to strengthen us, God gives us something to do in connection with every gift. He could have sent to each tent of the Israelites its daily supply of manna in a covered dish, but, instead, he compelled them to go out and gather it. Thus the farmer must plow, sow, and reap, though God, after all, does the most of the work.

3. God sends us a day's portion at a time, "our daily bread," "strength for the day," light and wisdom for the day; no more. He wants us to trust him for the morrow.

4. God's Sabbaths are special aids to a life of faith. They take us out of our atmosphere of daily cares, and give us time to study God's providences and draw close to his loving heart. Sabbath rest means better work all the week. No one ever lost anything — manna or anything else — by observing the Lord's day.

NOTE that this reference to the Sabbath, before the giving of the Fourth Commandment, shows that the Sabbath was a very ancient and fundamental institution.

III. **The Lesson from Moses. He rebukes the Israelites' Complaints.** — Vs. 6–8. The next step was for Moses to communicate God's promise to the murmuring people. He did this in such a way as to shame them for their ingratitude and lack of faith.

Forgetting our Blessings.

6. And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel. Either in a general convocation, or through a meeting of their leading men. **At even.** The quails came at even, the manna the next morning. **Ye shall know that the Lord hath brought you out from the land of Egypt.** This suggests that the Israelites had been arguing, "If it really was the Lord that led us from Egypt, he would not have brought us into this barren, hungry desert."

7. And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the Lord. It seems plain, from v. 10, that the reference is to the glowing of the cloud, which showed that God was displeased, notwithstanding his gracious purpose to supply their wants. **For that he heareth your murmurings against the Lord.** These words were a warning, reminding the people that their complaints were really finding fault with God, and that God could hear every peevish word. **And what are we, that ye murmur against us?** "Meek as Moses," we say, and Chadwick considers this a good example of Moses' meekness. He is fiery enough, but not for himself; it is because he knows that he is only God's faithful, humble servant, and, therefore, finding fault with him is finding fault with God, as he says in v. 8. Moses' great sin, that kept him out of Canaan forty years later, was partly in forgetting this, and growing angry on his own account. See Num. 20: 10, 11.

8. And Moses said. Speaking this time directly to the people, and not through

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9. And Mō'ses spake said unto Aar'on, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Is'ra-el, [1] Come near before the LORD: for he hath heard your murmurings.

10. And it came to pass, as Aar'on spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Is'ra el, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the LORD [2] appeared in the cloud.

[1] Num. 16: 16. [2] V. 7; Ex. 13: 21; Num. 16: 19.

Aaron. **The Lord shall give you.** One of the reasons why Moses was a great prophet was his full confidence in the promises of God. He did not go before the people and say, "God has told me that this will happen," thus throwing upon God the responsibility of the prediction; he said boldly, "This *will* happen." **Your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord.** Moses was their leader, but God was *his* Leader. To distrust a God-led man is, in a sense, to distrust God. A dollar bill may be very dirty and ragged, but we trust it because of the government seal upon it. So we trust God-fearing men, not because of themselves, but because they have identified themselves with God.

HOW DOES MOSES' REBUKE FIT US? 1. Our murmurings and failure to trust God arise, like the complaints of the Israelites, from our forgetfulness of the past. Let us not scorn the Israelites because they forgot the miracles before Pharaoh and at the Red Sea, until we are sure we are not forgetting the blessings God has heaped upon us. The best argument for trust is gratitude.

"He who hath led will lead
All through the wilderness.
He who hath fed will feed;
He who hath blessed will bless."

2. We, like the Israelites, forget that God hears our complaints. Many of our worries we should hardly like to put into words and speak them aloud, remembering that God is present. Yet he hears our *thoughts*.

ILLUSTRATION. Science tells us that no one moves a finger without setting in motion ether waves that travel to the farthest star. So when we find fault with the weather, with our "luck," with a thousand other dispensations of Providence, the complaint does not stop short of the very throne of God.

IV. **The Lesson from the Cloud. God rebukes his Murmuring People.**—Vs. 9–12. A wise teacher goes over the lesson more than once, in different ways. After Moses had taught it at God's command, the Lord himself called the people together for a still more impressive lesson. The summons was proclaimed by Aaron: 9. **Come near before the Lord.** That is, probably, before the cloudy pillar, God's visible manifestation of himself. The Israelites knew that God is everywhere, but he was in the cloud in a special and peculiar sense; just as we find God especially near to us in our church, though he is also in our homes and schools and offices.

ILLUSTRATION. The artist sees beauty everywhere, but it is because he first studied to see beauty in the art gallery and art school. So the more we seek God in his house, the more likely we are to find him elsewhere also.

For he hath heard your murmurings. Would not God have sent food if the Israelites had not complained? Most assuredly; and he would have sent it at a time and in a way far better for them. God understands our needs, and loves us, and we can safely trust him to meet all our real wants.

ILLUSTRATION. Christ, also, was in the wilderness, and was hungry for forty days; but when Satan would make Christ murmur, our Saviour remembered the manna (compare Deut. 8: 3) and trustfully answered, "Man doth not live by bread alone." *Then*, when he had refused to complain, the angels came and fed him.

In obedience to Aaron's command, the multitude looked away from the camp to the mysterious cloud that led their journeys, and they beheld a most significant sign.

The Warning in the Cloud.

10. **The glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud**, as Moses and Aaron had just predicted; it became dazzlingly bright; God was manifesting his glorious presence. Note the simplicity of the manifestation, so suited to the place and the people, and so different from the complex visions seen in later ages by Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. This is a strong evidence of the truthfulness of the record.

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11. And the LORD spake unto Mō'ses, saying,

12. [1] I have heard the murmurings of the children of Is'ra-el: speak unto them, saying, [2] At even ye shall eat flesh, and [3] in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I [am, am] the LORD your God.

13. And it came to pass, [that] at even, [that] [4] the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning [5] the dew lay round about the [host, camp].

[1] V. 8. [2] V. 6. [3] V. 7. [4] Num. 11: 31; Psa. 78: 27, 28. [5] Num. 11: 9.

11. **And the Lord spake unto Moses,** doubtless within hearing of all the people. God had spoken to Moses in private; why did he not now speak to the people? Because he wished to do honor to his prophet and increase Moses' influence.

12. **Speak unto them.** This was the same Moses that had trembled (Ex. 4: 10, 11) at God's command to lead the Israelites. "I cannot talk," said Moses. "Who hath made man's mouth?" was God's reply. Moses had learned, meanwhile, what is the secret of the only oratory worth mention, namely, to listen to God, and then repeat what God has said. **Saying, At even** (literally, *between the two evenings*, that is, in the late afternoon) . . . **ye shall know that I am the Lord your God.** Through the evidence of the quails.

TWO QUESTIONS AND TWO TRUTHS. 1. Why does not God give us such miraculous proofs of his presence as he gave the Israelites in the flaming cloud and audible voice? Because he has given them once, we have the records, and believing them, we can walk by faith, as seeing him who is invisible; and that is the noblest way to trust.

2. Why did God say, *Ye shall know that I am the Lord your God?* Did they not chiefly need to know that God is almighty? all-wise? all-loving? No; for to know that God is *your* God is the best thing you can know, and the most certain to remove all your fears.

V. **The Lesson from the Miracle. Quails and Manna.** — Vs. 13–15. God had taught the lesson of trust in two ways, — by Moses' words, and by his own words spoken from the flaming cloud. Finally, he taught the same truth by two object-lessons. 13. **And it came to pass that at even.** God delayed the blessing a little, in order to strengthen their faith. **The quails came up, and covered the camp.** "They *came up* from the Arabian Gulf, across which they fly in the spring in great numbers, and are often so fatigued after their passage, and fly so low, as to become an easy prey wherever they alight." — *Bush.* "I have myself found the ground in Algeria, in the month of April covered with quails for an extent of many acres at daybreak, where on the preceding afternoon there had not been one." — *Tristram.* "The quails, as appears by the subsequent narrative, were supplied, not regularly, but only on rare occasions; in fact (so far as appears) only here in the Wilderness of Sin, and at Kibroth-Hattaavah, in the wilderness of Paran (Num. 11: 31–34). They were not a necessary, but an indulgence." — *Rawlinson.* "The Egyptians had a way of preserving wild fowl by drying them in the sun. It is likely, therefore, that the tribes were enabled to store some of this abundant supply for future use." — *William M. Taylor, D.D.*



Quail.
(Coturnix Vulgaris.)

THE TEACHING OF THE QUAILS. The miracle was not the creation of something new, or at least with new qualities, as in the case of the manna, but it lay in bringing the quails to the right place at the

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14. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness *there lay* [1] a small round thing, *as* small as the hoar frost on the ground.

15. And when the children of Is'ra-el saw *it*, they said one to another, It *is* manna: What is it? for they wist not what it *was*. And Mō'ses said unto them, [2] This *is* It is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.

[1] Num. 11: 7; Deut. 8: 3; Psa. 78: 24. [2] John 6: 31; 1 Cor. 10: 3.

God in Nature. right time. This kind of miracle, we believe, our Father is constantly working for his children. God has not made nature like a vast machine, and gone away and left it. He lives in all his works, — the sun, rain, wind, the very birds of the air, and continually uses nature to bless those who honor him. That is the lesson in trust we may learn from the quails.

14. And when the dew that lay was gone up. They must wait for this, since the dew would render the manna difficult to gather. **Behold, upon the face of the wilderness.** Upon the ground, outside the camp. **A small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground.** How simple and natural is this description of the miracle, and how impossible that a myth could be presented with such reticence!

WHAT WAS THE MANNA? It was something *different* from their former food, and so it helped them to break away from their old life.

It was (v. 31) "like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey." "The taste of it (Num. 11: 8) was as the taste of fresh oil. It was ground in mills, beaten in mortars, seethed in pots, and used to make cakes. It fell with the dew.

It was *strength-giving* (in Psa. 78: 24, 25 it is called "the corn of heaven, the bread of the mighty"), and it sustained the Israelites through much toil, but it did not pamper their senses.

It was *miraculous*. There is found, in restricted portions of the peninsula of Sinai, a gum which offers some resemblances to manna. "It is the sweet juice of the tarfâ, a species of tamarisk. It exudes from the trunks and branches in hot weather, and forms small round white grains. In cool weather it preserves its consistency; in hot weather it melts rapidly. It is either gathered from the twigs of the tamarisk, or from the fallen leaves underneath the tree. The color is a grayish yellow. It begins to exude in May, and lasts about six weeks. The Arabs cleanse it from leaves and dirt, boil it down, strain it through coarse stuff, and keep it in leather bags; they use it as honey with bread. Its taste is sweet, with a slight aromatic flavor; travelers generally compare it with honey. The whole quantity now produced in a single year does not exceed six or seven hundred pounds." — *Cook*. "But the differences are much greater than the resemblance. The natural product is a drug, and not a food; it is gathered only during some weeks of summer; it is liable to speedy corruption, nor could there be any reason for preserving a specimen of this common product in the ark; it could not have sufficed, however aided by their herds and flocks, to feed one in a hundred of the Hebrew multitudes, even during the season of its production; nor could it have ceased on the same day when they ate the first ripe corn of Canaan." — *Chadwick*. So also Professor Macalister, of Cambridge, in *Hastings' Bible Dictionary*, after discussing four kinds of modern manna, says, "None of these could be the manna of Exodus, which was a miraculous substance." And yet God always, as here, works his miracles along the lines of nature, regarding nature "as an elastic band to stretch rather than as a chain to break."

15. They said one to another, What is it? "Manna is said to owe its name to this question, 'Man hu?' (What is it?)" — *Professor Macalister* in *Hastings' Bible Dictionary*.

PRACTICAL. There are many things about which we may be ignorant, as the Israelites were ignorant of the manna, and yet we can accept and use them just as well. No one understands the nature of gravitation, for instance, yet we know it exists and use it constantly. This principle applies to many of the most mysterious yet most helpful and necessary truths of religion, such as the atonement.

God over Nature. MANNA LESSONS. 1. The quails showed God *in* nature; the manna showed God *over* nature, the *super*natural. The quails teach us to trust that God is in the ordinary course of events; the manna teaches us to trust God for extraordinary interpositions of providence whenever necessary.

2. The miracle called for man's vigorous ***co-operation.*** The manna had to be gathered

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(v. 21) early in the morning. Later, it had to be prepared, "baked or seethed" (v. 23), though Bush thinks that this cooking was necessary only before the Sabbath. Besides, the Israelites still had to care for their flocks and herds.

3. The manna was a divine *protest against covetousness*. They were forbidden to store it up, and if they disobeyed, it became corrupt, and Moses rebuked them (vs. 19, 20). It was a literal exemplification of the Lord's prayer, "Give us day by day our daily bread," and it stands as an eternal warning against the grasping spirit of worldliness. See Matt. 6: 33.

4. The manna showed *God's equal care* for his people. The strong would gather more and the weak less, but when they came to measure it (vs. 17, 18), they found that each person had an "omer" only (from one-half to three-fourths of a gallon). "Others, however, suppose that the whole quantity gathered by any one family was first put into a common mass and then measured out to the several individuals composing the household." —*Bush*. At any rate, Paul draws from this fact (2 Cor. 8: 14, 15) a lesson in Christian charity, "Your abundance being a supply for their want, that there may be equality."

"Trust him; care not for the morrow;
Should thine omer overflow,
And some poorer seek to borrow,
Be thy gift nor scant nor slow.
Wouldst thou store it?
Ope thine hand, and let it go.

"Think, the glory yet is nigh thee,
Power unfelt arrests thine arm,
Love aye watching, to deny thee
Stores abounding to thy harm.
Rich and needy,
All are leveled by love's charm."
—*John Keble.*

5. Moses was bidden (vs. 32–34) to place before the ark an omerful of manna, to be kept forever as a memorial of God's goodness. So should we treasure in our memories the kindness of God, and not in a vague indefinite way, but in vivid, particularizing details, often reviewed. Thus our lives will become trustful and happy.

"Go into your yesterdays to find God!"—*Joseph Parker.*

Bush considers the manna perhaps the greatest of Old Testament miracles, because of its regular appearance and long continuance in all parts of the desert, the intermission on the Sabbath, the double supply on Friday, the corruption that came on other days but not on Friday, and its sudden ceasing at the end of the forty years. "It was not, in fact, one miracle, but an astonishing combination of many."

CHRIST, THE HEAVENLY MANNA. The manna was a *type*. Paul called it (1 Cor. 10: 3) "spiritual meat," and Christ himself (John 6: 32) said, "It was not Moses that gave you the bread out of heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread out of heaven." This true bread was Christ himself. (See Peloubet's *Suggestive Illustrations* on John.) Christ is compared to manna because: —

1. He is *from heaven*. The eternal life he brings could not come from worldly sources.

2. He *meets the needs of all*, feeds the child and the strong man alike, the unlearned and the wise.

3. He is *free*. We have only to reach out and receive from him eternal life.

4. He *fulfils all desires*, — the hunger for God, for purity, for heaven, for safety, for joy; he is a perfectly satisfying food for the soul.

5. He is *quiet* in his coming, like the manna. Christ comes not "with observation."

6. He is *to be found early*, as the manna was gathered before the sun grew hot. There are eleventh-hour Christians, but the only safe way is to "remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth."

7. He is *mysterious*. They did not understand the manna, yet they ate it. Don't wait to understand Christ before you will receive him.

8. He is *near*. "Both the manna and Christ are at every man's tent door." — *Pulpit Commentary*.

9. He is *for every day*. "No man can live on a past religious experience." We are constantly to "feed on Christ," by praying to him, by reading about him, by talking about him, and joining him in his work in the world.

"How richly in the desert Israel fared,
By God's own hand with food angelic fed,
Which with the dew around the camp was shed.
That other dew, brow-drenching, they were spared
In tilling thorn-cursed ground — sad burden shared
By all for Adam's sin; but ate their 'bread'
As from a table in the desert spread,

'Without their labor,' or their thought 'prepared.'
So God's salvation, the true bread from heaven,
In rich completeness is before us set,
Fresh with the Spirit's dew, and freely given;
But not without the labor of Another,
Toils, tears, and thorny crown, and bloody sweat,
Of Him who is God's Fellow and man's Brother."
— *Richard Wilton.*

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LESSON II. — July 13.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS. — DUTIES TO GOD.

Exodus 20: 1–11.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.*** — LUKE 10: 27.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Get Attention by asking, What are the best-known words of the New Testament? (The Lord's Prayer.) And of the Old Testament? (The Ten Commandments.) Describe their influence on history. Then ask the class under what circumstances this great code was given.

Review the first lessons in the wilderness training school, and add the two supplemental lessons in trust.

On Pencil Tablets let all the class write the lesson outline, as you teach the new lesson on duty.

Write "What?" on four slips of paper, numbering them from 1 to 4. "Why?" will be written on four other slips, and "How?" on four more. The scholars will draw these at random, and as each commandment comes up, the scholars that hold the slips with its number will answer regarding it the questions: "What does it forbid?" "Why does it forbid this?" "How can we obey?"

Close with Christ's summary of the first table in Matt. 22: 37.

THE SECTION.

Ex. 17: 1–20: 11, including the stories of the smitten rock, the battle with the Amalekites, the establishment of judges, the covenant in Sinai. Also, the parallel passage in Deut. 5: 1–15, and Matt. 22: 34–40.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

Books on the topography of the Exodus referred to in the last lesson. "Moses at the Battle of Rephidim," articles in *The Expositor*, February and April, 1897. *The Voice from Sinai*, by Farrar (Whittaker); *Weighed and Wanting*, by D. L. Moody (30 cts., Revell); *The Law of the Ten Words*, by Dykes (Hodder & Stoughton); *The Ten Commandments*, by Dale; *The Ten Commandments in the Nineteenth Century*, by Schenck (Funk & Wagnalls); *The Ten Commandments as a Covenant of Love*, by H. Clay Trumbull, D.D. (Sunday-School Times Co.); *University Lectures on the Ten Commandments*, by Boardman (Am. Baptist Pub. Soc.); *The Ten Commandments*,

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 3–11; Matt. 22: 37–40.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. Fifty days after leaving Egypt. According to the common chronology, in May, B. C. 1491.

Place. Probably on the plain now called Er Rahah, at the foot of the peak Ras Sufsâfeh (Mount Sinai) of Jebel Mousa; in the southern part of the Sinaitic peninsula, between the northern branches of the Red Sea.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: Lessons in Duty toward God.

I. INTRODUCTORY. TWO NEW LESSONS IN TRUST (Ex. 17, 18).
Meribah. Rephidim. Jethro.

II. HOW THE LAW WAS GIVEN (Ex. 19: 1–25).
The oath of allegiance.

III. THE AUTHORITY FOR THE LAW (Ex. 20: 1, 2).

The First Table: Duties toward God.

IV. FIRST COMMANDMENT. THE DUTY OF SUPREME SERVICE OF GOD (v. 3).
The law against idolatry.

V. SECOND COMMANDMENT. THE DUTY OF PURE WORSHIP (vs. 4–6).
The law against image-worship.

VI. THIRD COMMANDMENT. THE DUTY OF REVERENCE (v. 7).
The law against profanity.

VII. FOURTH COMMANDMENT. THE DUTY OF CONSECRATED TIME (vs. 8–11).
The law of the Sabbath.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

Subjects to be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

Incidents of the journey to Sinai.
Ways in which the Ten Commandments are unique.
Why the Decalogue was given so mysteriously and grandly.
Reasons for the order of the first four commandments.
Why idolatry is forbidden.
Why profanity is wrong.
Why was the Sabbath instituted?

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article by Dean Stanley in *Good Words*, 1880; *Lent Lectures on the Decalogue*, by Oakley (Smith & Elder); Chadwick's treatment in *The Expositor's Bible* is especially fine; *The Open Mystery*, by Mrs. Whitney (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.); *Some Observations on the Inconvenience of the Ten Commandments*, by George Hanmer Leycester, a quaint treatise published at Oxford in 1795; *The Social Law of God*, by Washburn (Whittaker); *The Decalogue*, by Wordsworth (Longmans, Green & Co.); *An Exposition of the Ten Commandments*, by Hopkins (Am. Tract Soc.); *The Rule of God's Commandments*, by Jelf (Soc. for Promoting Christian Knowledge); *The Ten Commandments*, by Rev. G. Campbell Morgan (15 cts., Colportage Assoc.).

PICTURES.

Moses striking the Rock, Raphael, Murillo; *Moses receiving the two Tables of the Law*, Raphael, West; *Moses presenting the Law to the People*, Raphael, Beale; *The Publication of the Law*, Rosselli (in the Sistine Chapel, Rome); *Moses receiving the Law*, a panel in Ghiberti's bronze doors, (the Baptistry, Florence); *Moses*, the central figure in Sargent's great painting in the Boston Public Library; *Victory, O Lord!* a representation of the battle at Rephidim by Sir John E. Millais reproduced in the *Magazine of Art*, March, 1901.

PRONUNCIATIONS.

Er Râ'hăh, Rā Sūfsâ'fĕh, Sī'năi (Sī'nă) or Sī'nāi, Sĭn, Hō'reb, Wā'dy, Mĕr'ĭbăh, Rĕph'ĭdĭm, Am'ĕlikites A'arŏn, Mĭr'ĭăm, Hŭr, Jĕth'rō or Jē'thrō, Reū'ĕl, Zĭppō'răh or Zĭp'pōrăh, Gĕr'shŏm, Elĭē'zĕr.

I. **Introductory. Two New Lessons in Trust.** — Ex. 17, 18. The first lesson in God's wilderness training school was one of trust, taught by the manna. God now thought the Israelites' faith strong enough to lead them away from the borderland of Sin, eastward, deeper into the desert. But alas! their trust was still weak. After two stages (Num. 33: 12, 13), which brought them near to Sinai, their water supply gave out, and they were almost ready to stone Moses in their despair. The great leader would not work the miracle before the threatening throng, but took some of the elders for witnesses, and went on ahead of the march to a great rock in Mt. Horeb. This rock he named Meribah (*strife*), because of the conduct of the people. There God manifested his presence; and Moses, taking, very fittingly, the staff with which he had worked water miracles in Egypt and at the Red Sea, smote the rock, from which a refreshing stream immediately issued. Tradition points to a detached fissured rock, about fifteen feet high, in Wady Lejá, as the rock of the miracle, and also declares that this rock followed the Israelites through their wanderings, perpetually pouring forth water. Paul makes use of the story (1 Cor. 10: 4), but interprets it spiritually; that life-giving rock was Christ. Hence the beautiful hymn, "Rock of Ages, cleft for me."

Meribah.

THE SECOND LESSON IN TRUST. The people's faith, that must have been strengthened by this new lesson in trust, was immediately put to a severe test. They had reached Rephidim, which is probably the modern Wády Feirán, the most fertile oasis in the entire district. Once it supplied a considerable population,



From a Photograph by Wilson.

The Sinai Valley, from Aaron's Hill.

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1. And God spake [1] all these words, saying,
2. [2] I [am / am] the LORD thy God, which [have] brought thee out of the land of E'gypt, [3] out of the house of [a] bondage.

[1] Deut 5: 22.
[2] Lev. 26: 1; Psa. 81: 10.
[3] Ex. 13: 3.
[a] Hebrew, *bondmen*.

Rephidim. and it still has its grove of palms and tamarisks. Here the desert tribe of Amalekites made a fierce attack upon the invading host. It was the Israelites' first battle. Would this nation of slaves stand their ground? Moses took his position on the hill, seven hundred feet high, now called Jebel Tahuneh, overlooking the valley. In a passion of entreaty, he held up to heaven the rod, symbol of God's frequent mercies. The great leader had already discovered in Joshua a worthy assistant, and Joshua commanded the chosen men, selected for the battle. It was observed that when, for weariness, Moses' hands sank down, the Amalekites prevailed, but when he lifted them to heaven, Israel prevailed; therefore Aaron, and Hur (Miriam's husband), supported his arms on either side, and thus became, for all succeeding ages, types of modest, faithful assistants. By sunset the desert tribes were thoroughly defeated; and to commemorate this second lesson in trust Moses reared an altar, which he named Jehovah-nissi, *The Lord is my banner*.

THE NATION ORGANIZED. About this time Jethro, Moses' father-in-law (or brother-in-law, if the Reuel of Ex. 2: 18 is not the same man), came to Moses, bringing his wife Zipporah and his two sons, Gershom and Eliezer, left behind among the

Jethro. Midianites when Moses set out to free his nation. Jethro saw Moses, through a whole day, wasting time and strength in deciding minor disputes, and suggested the appointment of rulers of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens, who would decide the smaller matters, leaving Moses free for the great interests of the people. This was done, and became the basis (Kalisch) of Alfred the Great's Saxon constitution, and thus of the constitution of modern England and America.

II. **How the Law was Given.** — Ex. 19. It was now three months after the crossing of the Red Sea. From Feirán (Rephidim) the host proceeded eastward, through a wild, mountainous region, to Sinai, which doubtless is to be identified with the peak now called Jebel Mousa (Moses' Mountain). At its northwestern base stretches Er Ráhah, "The wilderness of Sinai," the only plain in the neighborhood capable of holding two million persons, allowing a square yard for each. The camp itself (Palmer) was doubtless more extensive, occupying the neighboring glens and mountain-sides, wherever there was sufficient fertility for the cattle. Fronting the plain is a lofty and precipitous bluff, Ras Sufsâfeh, whence, probably, the law was proclaimed. This momentous event, unparalleled in history till Christ came, was prepared for by three days of purification. A cordon was drawn about the sacred mountain, that the people might not touch it. The awful voice of Jehovah summoned Moses upon the heights. A loud, trumpet-like sound, the bursting forth of flame and smoke, and the quaking of the mountain accompanied the interview. All this was to impress the commandments more firmly upon the minds of the people.

In the midst of these stupendous scenes, Moses was commanded by God to address the people with the reminder, "How I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself," calling to mind the story of their great deliverance. It was this God, so powerful and gracious, that demanded their allegiance. With one voice the people took the oath of allegiance, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do," Moses reported these words to the Lord, and the way was open for the proclaiming of the law of duty.

III. **The Authority for the Law.** — Ex. 20: 1, 2. **1. And God spake all these words.** This supreme law is issued by the supreme authority. The divine authorship of the commandments is proved by their astonishing unlikeness to anything man has ever written. There is nothing comparable to them in all the literature of Egypt, from which Moses and his people had come. Moody tells about an infidel who was converted by perceiving how impossible it is that Moses could have originated this unparalleled and majestic code. For more than three thousand years it has been the great cornerstone of the world's law, and it is as true now as it was in the days of Moses.

2. I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. God rests his authority on his benefits. "How do you know there is a God?" some one asked an Arab. He answered, "How do I know whether a man or a camel passed my tent last night?" Everywhere we can see the foot-

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3. Thou shalt have $^{no}_{none}$ other gods before me.

[1] Deut. 5: 7; Jer. 25: 6.

prints of a loving Father. Because God had led the Israelites thus far, he had the right to prescribe laws for their future.

NOTE that, though the commandments are usually held to exhibit, as compared with the gospel, the sterner side of God's nature, yet in the very preamble the appeal is not to the terror of God's just wrath, but to the memory of his loving-kindness.

THE TWO TABLES. We are not told just how the commandments were divided upon the two stone tables, but it is commonly supposed that the first table contained the four commandments we study to-day, setting forth our duties to God; while the second table, which we study next week, set forth in six particulars our duty to man.



From a Photograph by Wilson.

Jebel Mousa and Sufsafeh, from Aaron's Hill.

IV. **The First Commandment. The Duty of Supreme Service of God.** — V. 3. WHAT IS FORBIDDEN? 3. **Thou shalt have no other gods before me.** That is, "in addition to me, in my presence." This first commandment does not directly forbid image-worship, which is reserved for express mention in the second commandment; but if it is followed out, it covers the ground of all four commandments relating to God, and, indeed, of the commandment against covetousness in the second table. The first commandment forbids idolatry, which consists in loving anything or any one more than God. It requires whole-hearted service of God, and especially the sincere worship which is at the basis of all service. It forbids heart idols, idols of wealth or ambition or vanity or fashion, as well as idols made of wood and stone.

The Law against Idolatry. WHY IS IDOLATRY FORBIDDEN? Because the Israelites had lived for centuries in idolatrous Egypt. Because they were bound for another idolatrous country. Because idolatry was to be their great temptation through all their history. Because there *is* only one God. Because he deserves our supreme devotion. Because whoever gives him a second place soon comes to give him no place at all. The Israelites proved this, time and again.

HOW CAN WE OBEY? (1) We must cleanse our hearts of all things that keep us from serving God first. "Many a man's heart is like some Kaffir's huts, so full of idols that there is hardly room to turn around." — *Moody.* (2) We must give *complete* and joyful obedience to God's commands, expressed through conscience and the Bible. Obedience must be entire, like an O. If it is incomplete, it is no longer an O but a C, and stands for Contempt, not Obedience. (3) Complete obedience to God does not exclude other obedience; it only subordinates it. A Christian may love and serve others than God, but only so far as God would approve. A Christian merchant, for instance, makes money by obeying the laws of trade in the fear of God; but a dishonest man follows trade where God tells him not to; he would rather do wrong than lose money, and so gold has become his god "before God."

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4. [1] Thou shalt not make unto thee [any] graven image, [or any likeness *of any thing* nor *the likeness of* any form] that [is] in heaven above, or that [is] in the earth beneath, or that [is] in the water under the earth:

5. [2] [Thou] thou shalt not bow down thyself [to] unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God [am] am [3] a jealous God, [4] visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, [unto] upon the third and [upon the] upon the fourth [generation] generation of them that hate me;

6. [And] and [5] shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

[1] Lev. 26: 1; Deut. 4: 16; Psa. 97: 7.
[2] Ex. 23: 24; Isa. 44: 15, 19.
[3] Ex. 34: 14; Deut 4: 24.
[4] Ex. 34: 7; Lev. 20: 5; Num. 14. 18; Psa. 79: 8. Isa. 14: 20, 21.
[5] Ex. 34: 7; Psa. 89: 34; Rom. 11: 28.

V. **The Duty of Pure Worship.** — Vs. 4–6. WHAT IS FORBIDDEN? **4. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.** This does not forbid painting and sculpture, for the Hebrews themselves were commanded to place golden cherubim in the very holy of holies.

5. **Thou shalt not . . . serve them.** That is what is forbidden — worship of God under any material image. When the Israelites, soon after this, made the golden calf, they broke the second commandment. Indeed, though they called the calf a symbol of the one God, they had really broken the first commandment in their hearts, or they would never have set up the idol.

WHY IS IMAGE-WORSHIP FORBIDDEN? *First reason.* **For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God.** He is careful of his honor, just as a father requires strict, prompt, and respectful obedience, and wants his children to love him more than they love a servant or a neighbor. It is for the children's good that the father is jealous in this way. "Jealousy," says Chadwick, "is the shadow thrown where the sunshine of love is intercepted." *Second reason.* **Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children.** Tendencies to idolatry and image-worship are inherited; they lie heavily **upon the third and upon the fourth generation.** They can be conquered (Ezek. 18: 20), but they are a fearful legacy to leave to one's children. *Third reason.* Moreover, a life free from idolatry, serving God fully, transmits its tendency also, as is shown in the following verse.

The Law against Image-worship.

6. And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me. The marginal reading of the revision is "a thousand generations," which follows the parallel passage in Deut. 7: 9. Punishment follows the evil for only four or five generations, but mercy follows the good for thousands of generations, so much easier is it for God to bless than to curse. The doctrine of heredity, therefore, becomes a strong incentive to a God-fearing life. **And keep my commandments.** It is not enough to love God; commandment-keeping must be added. A little girl I know is very likely to say, after a fit of naughtiness followed by punishment and weeping, "I love you, Mamma"; to which the wise mother replies, with a kiss, "Then why don't you mind me?" *Fourth reason.* Besides, no image is a real help toward knowing God. Dr. Trumbull illustrates the matter by picturing a son watching for his mother's return. Would it help him if he should pin her photograph in the window in front of him? *Fifth reason.* The use of material aids to worship, such as statues, pictures, crucifixes, wafers, relics, soon leads to the actual worship of them. That is doubtless why Christ left no picture or relic of himself. Dr. Dale tells how, in his college days, a picture of Christ hanging over his mantelpiece gradually became an object almost of superstition. *Sixth reason.* The worship of images, as is shown in heathen lands, debases the whole life, rendering it sensual, cruel, and full of fear.

HOW CAN WE OBEY? (1) We must not allow any material thing, such as money, fine clothes, costly houses, or physical beauty, to come between us and God. (2) We must hold exalted thoughts of God and Christ. Farrar teaches that this commandment is broken by all that set up, in art or theology or even in their own minds, false ideals of the Divine Being. (3) The Hebrews were in no danger of worshiping the golden cherubim in the holy of holies, because between them flashed out the awful Shekinah. So in our day the clear consciousness of a present Creator will save us from undue devotion to any created and material thing.

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7. [1] Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD [2] will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

8. [3] Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

9. [4] Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

10. But [but] the [5] seventh day [is the] sabbath [of, unto] the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, [6] nor thy stranger that [is] within thy gates:

[1] Ex. 23: 1; Psa. 15: 4; Matt. 5: 33.
[2] Mic. 6: 11.
[3] Ex. 31: 13.
[4] Ex. 23: 12; Luke 13: 14.
[5] Gen. 2: 2, 3; Ex. 16: 26.
[6] Neh. 13: 16.

VI. **The Duty of Reverence.** — V. 7. WHAT IS FORBIDDEN? **7. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.** This does not mean that we are never to use God's name. The Jews, perhaps, went to an extreme in this regard. God's covenant name was pronounced among them only once a year, when the high priest went into the holy of holies on the day of atonement. "As it is not a temple but a desert which no foot ever treads, so the sacred name is not honored by being *unspoken*, but by being spoken aright." — *Chadwick*. The third commandment bids us speak of God only reverently, and not in any *vain*, empty, or trifling way. The principle it inculcates will lead us to treat with reverence all that pertains to God, such as his Book, his house, his day.

The Law against Profanity.

WHY IS PROFANITY FORBIDDEN? (1) **For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.** Christ declared that for every "idle word" men are to "give an account in the day of judgment." How much more for the words that trifle with the name that is above every name! (2) This punishment begins at once, in this life. The profane man loses the respect of all good men, and he soon loses his own respect for sacred things. No one can speak lightly of God without coming to think lightly of him. (3) Swearing has been called "the most gratuitous of sins." There is not even the semblance of any advantage in it. (4) Swearing is a peculiarly low and disgusting sin. An old writer said that when the accusing angel, who records men's words, flies up to heaven with an oath, he blushes as he hands it in.

HOW CAN WE OBEY? (1) Combine with others in a pledge against swearing, as do the Catholic "Holy Name" societies, twenty thousand of whose members paraded the streets of Brooklyn recently. (2) Gain some conception of God's awful majesty. The Jewish rabbis said that the earth trembled when this commandment was proclaimed. (3) Men cease swearing in the presence of women. Remember that God is present everywhere. (4) Never laugh at an oath, no matter how jolly is the swearer, or how little he "means by it." To "mean nothing by it" is itself a sin. (5) No one uses in an oath the name of his loved wife or mother. Come to love God, and you will revere his name also. (6) Avoid all comic stories that associate ridiculous ideas with the Bible or with any service of the sanctuary. (7) Cultivate reverence toward all sacred things. Bow your head in prayer, or kneel in adoration. Observe the Sabbath with sacred care. Even the material form of the Bible should be handled carefully. Always enter a church with the thought of God's special presence there.

VII. **The Duty of Consecrated Time.** — Vs. 8–11. WHAT IS COMMANDED? **8. Remember the sabbath day.** *Remember* implies that the Sabbath already existed. **To keep it holy.** Possibly we talk too much about what *not* to do on the Sabbath. Here is the great thing to *do:* worship. The Sabbath is to be kept holy by church attendance, Bible study, and private prayer and meditation.

The Law of the Sabbath.

9. Six days shalt thou labour. This is part of the commandment. You must work before you can rest, and you must get your work out of the way before you can worship. **And do all thy work.** You are to work on Sunday, too, but not at "*thy* work." It is to be God's work, work for others and for eternity.

10. But the seventh day is a sabbath unto the Lord thy God. "Unto God?" Did not Christ say the Sabbath was made for man? Both statements are true, just as the Saturday half holiday in the shops is for the advantage of employer and employee alike. **In it thou shalt not do any work.** "Ah, but," people say, "this letter-writing, this

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11. For [1] in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

[1] Gen 2: 2.

studying, this household task is not work for me. I enjoy it; it rests me." Then consider whether it is not commonly called work, and whether your example would not lead others to do it for whom it would be toil.

ILLUSTRATION. "A Christian man was once urged by his employer to work on Sunday. 'Does not your Bible say that if your ass falls into a pit on the sabbath, you may pull him out?' 'Yes,' replied the other; 'but if the ass had the habit of falling into the same pit every Sabbath, I would either fill up the pit or sell the ass.'" — *Moody*.

Thou, nor thy son, etc. We are responsible for the Sabbath-keeping of others, so far as we can influence them. "We are our brother's keeper," and, in a way, his Sabbath-keeper. We can help others keep the Sabbath by refraining from making work for them, by setting a clean example, by honoring the Sabbath in our speech, and by evidently enjoying it in our lives.

ILLUSTRATION. "The Constitution of the United States protects the President in his weekly day of rest. He has ten days, 'Sundays excepted,' in which he considers a bill that has been sent to him for signature. Every workingman in the republic ought to be as thoroughly protected as the President." — *Moody*.

WHY THIS COMMANDMENT? (1) Because Sabbath-keeping is part of the nature of God and is woven into the constitution of his universe, as is stated in verse 11.

11. **For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth . . . and rested the seventh day.** We are living in the Sabbath of the world. God is now sustaining nature, but not creating. Science has never discovered the springing into existence of a new chemical element, or form of life. (2) Because God blesses the Sabbath-keeper. **Wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.** The Sabbath blessings are nearness to God, love to men, peace of soul, health of body, vigor for the coming week. They are the greatest blessings in the world, and just what the world most needs.

ILLUSTRATIONS. Gladstone once said that the secret of his long life was that, in the midst of all his pressing public cares, he always punctiliously observed the Sabbath.

"Our bodies are seven-day clocks; and if they are not wound up, they run down into the grave." — *Talmage*.

HOW CAN WE OBEY? (1) By planning ahead for Sunday, "remembering" it through the week, getting our work out of the way. (2) By entering upon the day in the spirit of worship, with Bible reading and prayer. (3) By giving God always the benefit of the doubt when we hesitate concerning Sunday work. (4) By carefully refraining from making needless work on Sunday. (5) By setting an unmistakable example.

ILLUSTRATIONS. In the midst of the heart-breaking Sabbath of Paris, the uproar of pleasure seeking and toil, it is a relief to come upon a certain shop in Rue Pierre Charron. On the close-drawn shutters, in the place where the firm advertisement would naturally appear, are these words, in bold characters: —

6 Jours pour Travailler

et le 7ème

pour se Reposer.

"Six days for labor and the seventh day for rest." That courageous sign rises higher in the Christian's regard than the Eiffel Tower close at hand.

Steel rails, constantly traveled over, actually get tired and become brittle, regaining their strength after a period of rest. All that shave have found out how much better work a razor will do if it is used only half the time, and most men keep two razors, alternating them in use. One of the most eminent of Philadelphia physicians was so convinced of the necessity for rest in order to the accomplishment of the best work, that frequently he would excuse himself from conversation with a patient, sleep for five or ten minutes in a private office, and return better able to give good advice.

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LESSON III. — July 20.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS. — DUTIES TO MEN.

Exodus 20 : 12–17.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*** — MATT. 19: 19.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Win Attention by a short drill on the order of the commandments. Write on ten squares of cardboard the words, "Idolatry," "Image-worship," "Blasphemy," "Sabbath," "Parents," "Murder," "Adultery," "Stealing," "Lying," "Covetousness." Hold them up in swift succession, and have the class repeat the commandments in concert. Then let the commandments be repeated out of the right order, the cards being held up one at a time. Then as each card is shown, let the class name the number of that commandment, as "fifth," "tenth," "first."

In teaching the Lesson use the plan followed last week, — six slips of paper marked "What?" six marked "Why?" and six marked "How?"

Close with the account of the ratification of the covenant, and impress upon the scholars the necessity that they not only hear and know God's law, but enter into solemn, sincere covenant with him to keep it.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

The books referred to in the last lesson. Trumbull's *Is a Lie ever Justifiable?* ($1.00, Scribners); Stall's admirable series of books on purity (Vir Publishing Co.); Trueblood's *The Federation of the World* ($1.00, Houghton, Mifflin & Co.); "Wealth" and "Money and the Kingdom," two chapters in Strong's *Our Country* (60 cts., Baker and Taylor).

PICTURES.

Those referred to in the last lesson.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

Subjects to be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

How may we pay honor to parents?
What should a Christian think about war?
Some temptations to impurity, and how to avoid them.
Present-day forms of dishonesty.
What is it to bear true witness for one's neighbor?
Some sins to which covetousness leads.
How it would change the world if every one kept the Ten Commandments.

THE SECTION

includes the lesson, the parallel passage in Deut. 5: 16–22, and Christ's illumination of the law (Matt. 5: 17–48).

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 12–17; Matt. 5: 19.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

The time and place are the same as in the last lesson.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: The Second Table of the Law: our Duties to Man.

I. FIFTH COMMANDMENT. THE DUTY OF HONORING PARENTS (v. 12).

The range of the duty.
Four reasons why.
How to honor parents. Six ways.

II. SIXTH COMMANDMENT. THE DUTY OF REGARD FOR LIFE (v. 13).

Murder distinguished from killing.
Four reasons for the sacredness of life.
How life is to be safeguarded. Five ways.

III. SEVENTH COMMANDMENT. THE DUTY OF PURITY (v. 14).

Thought as well as deed.
The ruin wrought by impurity.
Four steps in its conquest.

IV. EIGHTH COMMANDMENT. THE DUTY OF HONESTY (v. 15).

Things stolen besides money.
Why "honesty is the best policy" — and more.
Honesty in daily life.

V. NINTH COMMANDMENT. THE DUTY OF TRUTH-TELLING (v. 16).

Six modes of slander.
Four reasons that condemn it.
Four rules of speech.

VI. TENTH COMMANDMENT. THE DUTY OF CONTENTMENT (v. 17).

The immense scope of this commandment.
Four condemnations of covetousness.
Three cures for it.

VII. THE COVENANT RATIFIED (Ex. 24).

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12. [1] Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

13. [2] Thou shalt not kill. do no murder.

[1] Ex. 23: 26; Matt. 15: 4; Mark 7: 10; Luke 18: 20. [2] Deut. 5: 17; Matt. 5: 21.

Last week we studied the first table of the Law, our duties to God. This week we study the second table of the Law, our duties to man. Both lessons make up the second lesson God taught the Israelites in the desert training school. The first table is the basis of the second; the last six commandments flow from the first four. If God is to be revered and obeyed as our Father, man is to be loved and cherished as a brother.

I. **Fifth Commandment. The Duty of honoring Parents.** — V. 12. WHAT IS COMMANDED? 12. **Honour thy father and thy mother.** "That word 'honor' means more than mere obedience — a child may obey through fear. It means love, gratitude, respect." — *Moody*. The fifth commandment does not require a child to do wrong at a parent's bidding, but it does require a child to love even unlovely parents, because they hold to him the sacred relation of father and mother. But the commandment, to an Oriental, has a wider range, for "father" and "mother" meant, as Dr. Boardman says, "any who are reverend because of their years, their wisdom, their station, or their character."

WHY IS IT COMMANDED? (1) Because "parents are kings by a divine right." Theirs is "a natural authority which is a reflection from God's own, and is sustained in its just exercise by the will of God." — *Dykes*. "The baby's skies are mother's eyes." Cicero's exaggeration, "We ought to venerate a parent as we do God," is nevertheless based on a great truth. (2) Because parents are wiser than children, even ignorant parents usually having a wisdom gained from experience which is more valuable than the school learning their children may have gained. Abraham Lincoln declared, "All that I have I owe to my mother." (3) Because most parents do more for their children than the latter can ever repay. Prof. Edward W. Claypole, D. Sc., in a brilliant lecture entitled "What are you Worth?" figures up the money side of it alone. Every child brought to maturity means the expenditure — on the part of parents and community — of thousands of dollars for food, clothing, shelter, physicians, nurses, teachers, games, books, and the like. It is many years before a child gets out of debt to the world. (4) **That thy days may be long.** Dutiful children are free from the passions and vices that so often stunt the growth and shorten the life. Home is the place to learn the great lessons of obedience to God and love for country, and these lessons, well learned, lead to health, success, and honor, and an old age full of joy. Moreover, a nation made up of such children will also be long-lived, and Dr. Dykes thinks that this promise, of "the first commandment with promise," refers to the nation rather than individuals. The Romans significantly called a rebel a *parricide*.

HOW CAN WE HONOR OUR PARENTS? (1) By prompt and cheerful obedience; (2) by caring for them lovingly in poverty or sickness; (3) by the little tokens of respect that the aged prize so highly. On New Year's day in China every man and boy, from the emperor down, brings his mother a present, and makes her an address of honor and gratitude. (4) By honoring our parents before others. Mr. Moody tells of a Sunday-school scholar of his, a bright boy, whom his mother was educating by dint of much toil. One of the lad's school friends inquired once, "Who was that shabby old woman I saw you talking with the other day?" "Oh, that was my washerwoman," was the disgraceful answer. That young man, adds Mr. Moody, went down to ruin. (5) Do not postpone all this till it is too late, and your life is filled with useless regrets over the precious graves. (6) Taking the commandment in its widest sense, respect gray hairs everywhere, and honor all in authority over you, such as your pastor, teacher, employer, or magistrates. Lack in this respect is a growing evil, full of mischief to our nation.

II. **Sixth Commandment. The Duty of Regard for Life.** — V. 13. WHAT IS FORBIDDEN? 13. **Thou shalt not kill.** The R. V. gives the thought more accurately, "Thou shalt do no murder." Killing is sometimes justifiable; the Bible itself enjoins the killing of men for punishment, as when blasphemy had been committed, and of animals, as for sacrifice or to put dangerous beasts out of the way. But murder is always wrong. Murder is killing with hatred in one's heart, or carelessly assenting to slaughter. That is what the sixth commandment forbids. It also forbids that hatred in the heart which leads to murder. It also forbids suicide, that cowardly self-murder. And it forbids those slower

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14. [1] Thou shalt not commit adultery.
15. [2] Thou shalt not steal.

[1] Deut. 5: 18; Matt. 5: 27. [2] Lev. 19: 11; Matt. 19: 18.

forms of suicide, wrong habits of life, gluttony, strong drink that leads to murder so often and murders self as well, — all forms of excess, as tending to destroy health and shorten life, are included in this prohibition.

THE MODERN NEED for emphasizing this commandment is great. America has a fearful pre-eminence in murders, no fewer than 85,116 having been committed in the ten years from 1891 to 1901. So common has suicide become in the French army that it has been found necessary to refuse military funerals to suicides. Only five suicides are recorded in the Bible, the last being Judas.

WHY IS IT FORBIDDEN? (1) Because life can never be replaced. Science is as far from understanding it as ever. (2) Because life is a sacred trust. Every man represents a chain of life that reaches back, *unbroken*, to the time when God himself breathed life into man. (3) Because God has surrounded life with so many wonderful and intricate safeguards that he evidently considers it a very precious thing. (4) Because a regard for life elevates mankind. The nations where life is held cheap are invariably those low down in the scale, whereas the progress of civilization has gone on step by step with the founding of hospitals, the improvement of prisons, the alleviation of poverty, and the abolishing of war.

HOW CAN WE OBEY? (1) By loving all men. "Whoso hateth his brother is a murderer." We often hear the expression, "I wish he were dead." When that is true, in God's eyes a murder has already been committed. Waiting for "dead men's shoes" is sometimes as bad as the actual killing of those whose wealth is coveted. (2) By being "our brother's keepers." No one is free from blood-guiltiness who does not do what he can to save life and prolong it. Adulterating food is murder. So is selling intoxicating liquor. So is the maintaining of "sweat-shops," or dark and filthy tenements. (3) By doing what we can to abolish war. A most important step in this direction has been the establishment recently of the International Court of Arbitration at The Hague. (4) By carefully preserving and strengthening our own bodies. All intemperance, licentiousness, gluttony, needless worry or overwork are forms of suicide. On the other hand, the histories of the martyrs and reformers teach us that there are times when to lose life is really to find it; we lose the temporal, physical life, but gain the eternal life of the soul. (5) By spreading abroad the gospel. Christianity alone puts value into human life. H. L. Hastings contrasts the price of a man, seven dollars, in the Fiji Islands in 1844, and now, after missionary work, when seven million dollars would not buy one.

III. **Seventh Commandment. The Duty of Purity.** — V. 14. WHAT IS FORBIDDEN? **14. Thou shalt not commit adultery.** Christ himself explained this seventh commandment as forbidding the impure thought and desire as well as the impure act itself, and the law is to be understood in this wider sense. It includes also in its prohibition whatever leads to impurity, such as licentious books and pictures.

WHY IS IT FORBIDDEN? Because "blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," while the impure soon lose all sense of divine things. No sin, not even intemperance, so rapidly ruins a man, body, mind, and soul, as this sin. Moreover, it destroys the family, which is the basis of the State.

HOW CAN WE OBEY? Whoever would be pure in heart must keep his eyes pure from debasing pictures, statues, and books, his ears from hearing foul stories, and his mouth from telling them. Impure plays in our theaters are responsible for many a ruined life. Dancing, especially "round" dances, leads directly to licentiousness. If impurity already has a hold on one, the only way he can conquer it is (1) to hate the sin; (2) to recognize Christ as his only Saviour from it; (3) not to see how close an approach to it he can safely make, but to avoid it altogether; and (4) to fill his life so full of Christlike labors that there will be no room in all his twenty-four hours for anything else.

IV. **Eighth Commandment. The Duty of Honesty.** — V. 15. WHAT IS FORBIDDEN? **15. Thou shalt not steal.** The commandment does not forbid our stealing large things, but permit our stealing little things. "It is a sin to steal a pin." "Surely," said a man once, "you won't say that stealing a pin and a dollar are the same in God's eyes?" "Well," was the conclusive reply, "will you tell me how much more valuable to God a dollar is than a pin?" And neither does the commandment forbid our stealing material things and permit us to steal immaterial things. Thou shalt not steal time, Pro-

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16. [1] Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

[1] Ex. 23: 1; Matt. 19: 18.

crastinator. Thou shalt not steal reputation, Gossip. Thou shalt not steal faith, Infidel. Thou shalt not steal hope, Pessimist. "Nor *any thing* that is thy neighbour's" applies as well to this eighth commandment as to the tenth.

WHY IS IT FORBIDDEN? Because property is a divine institution. Ownership is a necessary part of that "pursuit of happiness" which our Declaration of Independence places among men's "inalienable rights." Upon the safe possession of honest gains depends the very structure of society. All progress is conditioned upon it; it is one important incentive to effort. "Honesty is the best policy," to be sure. All thieves are well represented by the man who stole one of Queen Victoria's diamonds valued at $600,000, and died in wretched poverty a few months afterward, not having dared to try to sell the jewel. But honesty is never best when it is mere policy. The only honest man is one who is honest because he loves God and wants to do his will, and loves mankind and desires their highest welfare.

LIBRARY. The story of Gyges' Ring, in Plato's *Republic* (bk. 2, chap. 3). See *Suggestive Illustrations* on Acts, p. 125.

HOW CAN WE OBEY? We must keep ourselves from little thefts, knowing that they lead to greater ones. We must not put all the big berries in the top of the basket, or write deceptive advertisements, or leave the quotation marks out of our essays, or drop work before the time is up, or pay inadequate wages, or take full wages for work only half done, or charge too high prices, or "beat down" the seller from a price that is just. We must count it stealing to take anything even with the owner's consent, if the owner does not know to what he is consenting, as when a dealer names all the good points of a horse, leaving his customer to discover the bad ones. Men think that success in business is impossible on these conditions, but that is a mistake. No capital is so valuable as a reputation for fair dealing.

V. **Ninth Commandment. The Duty of Truth-telling.** — V. 16. WHAT IS FORBIDDEN? **16. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.** This commandment is broken whenever we cause (*or permit*) others (*or ourselves*) to believe what is not true (or *may not be true*) concerning any man. We bear false witness, therefore, (1) in saying about a man what we know to be untrue; (2) in keeping silent when others say it; (3) in passing it on to others, by word of mouth or in print; (4) in "damning with faint praise"; (5) in refusing to say what we can for a man; (6) in needlessly repeating stories derogatory to others, even if they are true; (7) in making statements about others that we do not know to be true; (8) in using half-truths where we should speak the whole truth; (9) in twisting the truth by the wrong emphasis; (10) in believing a man guilty before he is proved not to be innocent.

WHY IS IT FORBIDDEN? (1) Because a man's reputation is one of his most precious possessions, and it is a terrible injury to be deprived of it. Slander has rightly been called "tongue murder." (2) Because no one can speak evil of another without lowering his manhood, just as he cannot handle coals without soiling his fingers. (3) Because the habit of slander becomes stronger with the practice. "A sharp tongue is the only edged tool that grows keener with constant use." (4) Because disparaging words, once spoken, cannot be recalled. A woman once confessed to a priest that she had told scandal. He gave her a thistle top and bade her scatter the seeds one by one. Surprised, she obeyed. "Now," said he, "go, gather them up again. They are the seeds of evil you have sown." Bishop Hall compared the tongues of busybodies to Samson's foxes with firebrands tied to their tails.

HOW CAN WE OBEY? (1) The only safe rule is to say nothing on earth we would not have repeated in heaven, and nothing behind a man's back we would not say before his face. When anything against a person was told to Hannah More, she always said, "Come, we will go and ask if it be true"; and the scandalmonger, most unwillingly, had to go with her. (2) Make a practice of praising others. When Peter the Great heard an evil tale of a man, he would say, "What *good* can you tell about him? It is easy to splash mud, but I would rather help a man keep his coat clean." (3) It is wise not to talk much about others. "We know," says Dykes, "so extremely little, as a rule, about our neighbor's affairs, that we can rarely discuss them without misstating or misrepresenting them; and therefore a scrupulously truthful person will choose to discuss them as little as

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17. [1] Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, [2] thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour's.

[1] Deut. 5: 21; Luke 12: 15. [2] Job 31: 9; Matt. 5: 28.

possible." (4) The supreme cure for false witness-bearing is to fix our minds on the true witness-bearing. Christ said that his disciples were his witnesses. The Greek word translated "witness" is the same as our word "martyr"; that is, a witness is absolutely unselfish, paying no heed to his life in comparison with the truth. In Armenia and China, recently, many thousands have lost their lives in bearing true witness for Christ to their neighbors. Now it is plain that no one can be a true witness for Christ and a false witness against his neighbor.

VI. **Tenth Commandment. The Duty of Contentment.** — V. 17. WHAT IS FORBIDDEN? 17. **Thou shalt not covet . . . any thing that is thy neighbour's.** Covetousness is not the desire for more; that desire is at the basis of all progress and civilization, and it is right to seek to satisfy it. Covetousness is the desire to possess what another person has. It is a greater sin than envy, which merely wants a duplicate of what another person has. Envy leads to discontent with ourselves; but covetousness, to hatred of others. Envy makes a weakling; covetousness, a fiend. "The practical effect of the tenth commandment, standing where it did, like a solemn appendix to the rest, was to throw back upon them all a more searching light. It was to show that they were to be applied to inward desire, which is sin, as well as to the outward action, which is crime. In effect, it doubled the whole law." — *Dykes.* Read in its light, the sixth commandment, for instance, is broken by the desire to kill as well as by actual murder, and the seventh by lust in the heart as well as by the licentious deed.

WHY IS IT FORBIDDEN? (1) Because both envy and covetousness amount to upbraiding God, condemning his judgment, denying his goodness and wisdom, charging him with injustice and mismanagement. (2) Because, therefore, both of these sins make a man unhappy, restless, discontented, and take away his will from the service of God. (3) Because there is no sin named in the first nine commandments to which covetousness may not lead. It brings about idolatry, image-worship, blasphemy of God, Sabbath breaking, dishonor to parents, murder, infidelity to marriage, theft, lying. The Decalogue is no anticlimax. (4) Because, notwithstanding this, covetousness is one of the most widespread, insidious, and respectable of sins. Moody declared that among all the many confessions of sin he had heard, he had never heard a confession of covetousness.

HOW CAN WE OBEY? (1) Get at one with God. Learn that God's will for you is best. If it makes you poor, then welcome poverty; or sick, then let the couch be joyful; or lonely, then exult in solitude. Learn to say with all your heart, and in any Gethsemane, "Thy will be done." (2) Get at one with mankind. Covetousness cannot be conquered without a hearty sympathy with other men, so that we are enlarged with their blessings and exalted by their honors. (3) The practical cure for covetousness is giving; and often, to effect a cure, it must be such large giving as Christ urged upon the rich young ruler. There is a story of a converted miser, to whom a poor man came for help. "I'll give him a ham," said the converted miser, going to his smoke-house. "Give him the smallest ham," whispered the devil. "If you don't keep still," answered the reformed man, "I'll give him every ham in the smoke-house!"

VII. **The Covenant Ratified.** The Ten Commandments were the Law, but they became, by the solemn ratification of the people, a covenant between Israel and Jehovah. Ex. 20–23, containing the Ten Commandments and about seventy enactments based upon them, were written by Moses in a book called "The Book of the Covenant" (Ex. 24: 7). This was read to the people, and they answered with one voice (Ex. 24: 3), "All the words which the Lord hath spoken will we do." Then was performed in the presence of the entire nation the "blood covenant." Blood, the symbol of life, was sprinkled on book, altar, and people, sealing them to the Law and the Law to them, and constituting them the covenant people of God. This momentous act being accomplished, Moses, at God's command, withdrew into the mount for forty days and nights, to receive the stone tables of the law, and the further revelations and counsels God had for him.

LIBRARY. See Trumbull's *The Blood Covenant* ($2.50, Scribners).

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LESSON IV. — July 27.

WORSHIPING THE GOLDEN CALF.

Exodus 32 : 1–6, 30–35.

Study Verses 1–35.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.* — EX. 20: 3.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Win Attention by asking the class which of the Ten Commandments they think is most often broken in modern times. After their opinion has been given, ask them which commandment was first broken by the Israelites.

Take up the Lesson Outline next. The scholars may be told that the questions will concern Moses, Aaron, the people, Jehovah, and the idol; and five scholars may be appointed, each to answer the questions on one of these five themes.

Apply each division of the lesson to your scholars, discussing (1) the real reasons for their own disobedience, (2) what some of those disobediences are likely to be, and (3) what punishments are certain to follow.

Close with an earnest application of the fourth and fifth divisions of the lesson, pointing your class to Christ, who alone can make atonement for our sins.

THE SECTION.

Ex. 32–34. The parallel account in Deut. 9: 11–21.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. Sometime in July, B. C. 1491 (according to the common chronology). Toward the close of Moses' forty days on Mt. Sinai, six or seven weeks after the giving of the law.

Place. On Mt. Sinai, and in the plain, Er-Râhah, at its foot.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

Subjects to be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

The attractions of idolatry.
The tender side of Moses' character.
The stern side of Moses' character.
The golden calves of modern times: mammon-worship, etc.
How modern idolatry is punished by God.
Aaron's character: men who are led.

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 30–32; John 4: 24; Eccl. 12: 13, 14.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: A Lesson in Obedience.

I. THE CAUSES OF DISOBEDIENCE (v. 1).
   Without a leader.
   The longing for idols.

II. THE GREAT DISOBEDIENCE (vs. 2–6).
   The weak leader.
   Sacrifices made to idols.

III. THE PUNISHMENT OF DISOBEDIENCE (vs. 7–29).
   The tables broken.
   The idol destroyed.
   The idolators slain. (See also vs. 34, 35.)

IV. INTERCEDING FOR THE DISOBEDIENT (vs. 30–34).
   Mercy and justice.

V. THE DISOBEDIENT RESTORED (Ex. 33, 34).

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

Commentaries on Exodus. Two eloquent chapters in Mrs. Whitney's *The Open Mystery* ($1.25, Houghton, Mifflin & Co.); "The Golden Calf," by F. A. Cox in *Kitto's Journal of Sacred Literature*, vol. IV.; the hymn, "Who is on the Lord's side?"; John Newton's poem, "The Golden Calf." H. H. Boyesen's novel, *The Golden Calf* (Flood and Vincent). "The Six Pedestals," an illustration of idolatry in Wells' *Three Years with the Children* ($1.25, Revell); illustrations of the golden calf in Peloubet's *Suggestive Illustrations on Acts* (p. 165), and on John (p. 286). The story of Kapiolani's defiance of the volcano-goddess Pele, in Anderson's *Missions in the Sandwich Islands*. Trench's poem, "Mahmoud, the Breaker of Idols"; Spurgeon's sermon, "Sin laid

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PICTURES.

The Israelites worshiping the Golden Calf, Raphael. A picture of the scene by Beale.

on Jesus," in *Twelve Soul-winning Sermons* (Revell); Pentecost's *Grace abounding in the Forgiveness of Sins* (London: T. F. Downie).

1. And when the people saw that Mō'ses [1] delayed to come down (out of from) the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aar'on, and said unto him, [2] Up, make us gods, which shall [3] go before us; for (as for as for) this Mō'ses, the man that brought us up out of the land of E'gypt, we (wot know) not what is become of him.

[1] Ex. 24: 18; Deut. 9: 9. [2] Acts 7: 40. [3] Ex. 13: 21.

The first lesson in the wilderness training school was *trust;* the second, *duty*. It was necessary that after the giving of the Law should come a lesson in *obedience*, and that is what we study to-day. The people had ratified the covenant, crying with one voice, "We will be obedient." They had entered into the most binding of all relations, the "blood covenant." That is (Ex. 24: 6–8), in offering sacrifice, Moses had sprinkled half the blood on the altar and half of it upon the people, signifying the entrance of the law into the people's life, "blood of their blood." See Dr. Trumbull's book *The Blood Covenant*. Aaron and his sons and seventy elders of the people had ascended the holy mount with Moses, and had seen Jehovah himself, in some partial though overwhelmingly majestic revelation. Then Moses was called up higher into the mount, to receive instructions concerning the Tabernacle and other sacred matters, and for forty days the people lost sight of their leader. Then came the great disobedience.

I. **The Causes of Disobedience.** — V. 1. There were two causes of the Israelites' sin. The first was the prolonged absence of Moses. 1. **And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount.** It was an absence of forty days (Ex. 24: 18), on the most important of all errands, communion with God. Joseph Parker well asks, "Do we love solitude? Do we ever go up for our marching orders? Is it our habit to shut out the world and keep it far below us that we may have every day some five minutes at least with God?"

Without a Leader.

LIBRARY. The Quiet Hour literature of the Christian Endeavor Society, Boston. More than twenty-five thousand "Comrades of the Quiet Hour" are now enrolled, each covenanting to spend at least fifteen minutes every day alone with God.

It must not be forgotten that it was the people themselves who first urged Moses to go alone into the mount, for they were terrified with the lightning, the thunders, the quaking and smoking of the mountain (Ex. 20: 18–21). They knew he was there to gain blessings for them, but they were impatient.

PRACTICAL. God often tests our faith by compelling us to wait. And how we rebel! We want our prayers answered at once. God's providences are waiting for us on the mount, but we impatiently make our own stupid, calf-like providences



From a Photograph by Wilson.

Sinai Valley, towards the Plain of Er-Rahah.

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2. And Aar'on said unto them, Break off the [1] golden earrings, rings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them them unto me.

[1] Judg. 8: 24.

on the plain. We fall into disobedience, just as the Hebrews did, because we will not trustfully bide God's time.

ILLUSTRATION. Dr. William M. Taylor compares the test to which God put the Israelites thus early in their history to the heavy weight of cars with which engineers load a new bridge, before they count it safe to open it to public travel.

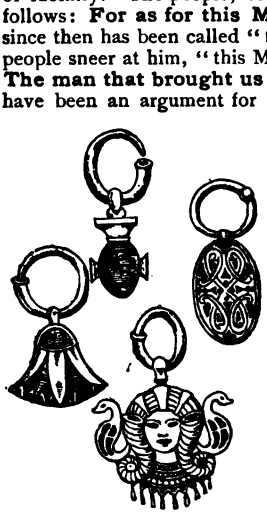
Longing for Idols.

THE SECOND CAUSE of disobedience was the people's longing for idolatry, which Moses' absence gave them a chance to gratify. In pursuit of this desire, **the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron.** They went to Aaron, Moses' brother, because Moses had left him (and Hur) in chief command during his absence (Ex. 24: 14). **And said unto him, Up, make us gods.** "Rather, *make us a god.*" — *Rawlinson.* The word is the plural, *Elohim*, used everywhere to denote the one God. We are told (Josh. 24: 14; Ezek. 20: 8) that the Israelites, during their long stay in Egypt, "the very metropolis of the world's idolatry," had become infected with that sin. And yet, so soon after the Passover, the manna, the smitten rock, who would have expected such ingratitude to God? No wonder that Josephus, the great Jewish historian, in his account of this period (Ant. III. 5) omits this shameful event.

A PICTURE OF IDOLATRY. "In this marvelous chapter," says Rev. F. B. Meyer, "we have the entire history of idolatry." It was attractive to the Hebrews because (1) they longed for a visible image of God; (2) idolatry seemed to have built up the great nations around them; (3) the worship of Jehovah was restrained and pure, while idolatry gave free rein to their passions. Their sin was (1) in breaking their solemn covenant with God; (2) in departing from the true God, since even the most beautiful idol utterly misrepresents him; (3) in forgetting all God had done for them, and their great need of him in that vast wilderness. Such is our sin whenever we "make us a god," of money or fashion or luxury or power or passion, and thus discard our Maker.

LIBRARY. Ruskin on idolatry, *Stones of Venice*, vol. 2, appendix 10.

Such were the true causes of the Great Disobedience, — impatience and faithless discouragement at Moses' absence, and a longing after the easy religion and base ceremonies of idolatry. The people, however, were ashamed to own the real causes, so they spoke as follows: **For as for this Moses.** Here was a man so great that every national deliverer since then has been called "the Moses of his race." He is absent only six weeks, and his people sneer at him, "this Moses!" Truly it requires a hero to give due honor to a hero. **The man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt.** You would think this would have been an argument for their grateful regard, but men of mean spirit hate their benefactors, just as the Jews hated Christ. **We wot** (know) **not what is become of him.** "Here is this Moses, who has already got himself lost; how shall he guide two millions of people?" If you want to sin, the silliest excuse will satisfy you.



Egyptian Earrings.

II. **The Great Disobedience.** — Vs. 2–6. **2. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings.** Doubtless, a part of the "spoil of the Egyptians" obtained when they left Egypt (Ex. 12: 35, 36). **Which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons.** "Earrings are worn in the East almost as much by men as by women." — *Rawlinson.* **And bring them unto me.** Possibly (Chadwick) "Aaron thought to save them from breaking the first commandment by joining them in a breach of the second." Or, very likely, he expected to thwart their desires by imposing hard conditions. It was the mistake weak men are continually making, — trying to hoodwink the devil. Moses would have come out boldly with a thundering No! Suppose Aaron had done

The Weak Leader.

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3. And all the people brake off the golden earrings (rings) which were in their ears, and brought them (them) unto Aar'on.

4. [1] And he received them (it) at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had (and) made it a molten calf: and they said, These be (be) thy gods, O Is'ra-el, which brought thee up out of the land of E'gypt.

[1] Ex. 20: 23; Deut. 9: 16; Psa. 106: 19; Acts 7: 41; Rom. 1: 23.

what Elijah did on Mount Carmel. The prophet opposed himself single-handed against the priests and the people, and alone with God he won a glorious victory. Equal boldness would have saved the day for Aaron.

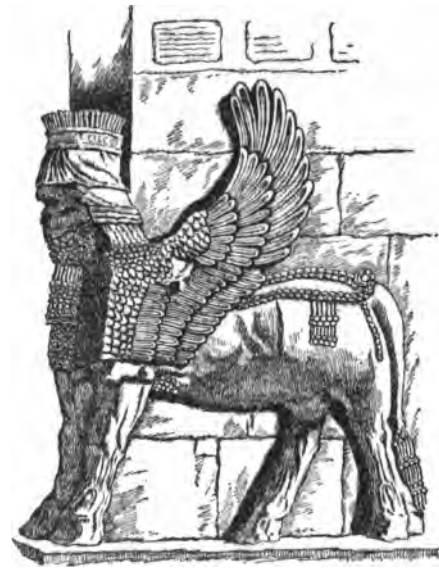
LIBRARY. Spurgeon's *John Ploughman's Talk*, "On Good Nature and Firmness" and *John Ploughman's Pictures*, "He who would please all will lose his donkey."

MODERN ILLUSTRATIONS. All complicity with crime on the part of a government, no matter how heavily they tax the criminals. All complaisant excuses for "sowing wild oats." Fear of taking the unpopular side in politics or social life, when conscience points that way.

3. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears. The sequel shows that *some* refused to join in the sin, but the great majority — generally speaking, all — gladly consented.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION. "We see the Israelites employing the very tokens of their deliverance to build a god for themselves. The very gifts of heaven — wealth, intellect, power — men turn into idols." — *E. H. Hull.*

Sacrifices for Idolatry.



From Calmet.

Winged Bull.

There is nothing for which men spend so liberally as sin. The direct income of the saloon, for instance, is two hundred times that of foreign missions.

4. He . . . fashioned it with a graving tool. Many scholars translate this *collected it* (the gold) *in a bag*. The engraving might have been done after the image was cast, or it may have reference to carving the wooden mold or image into or over which the molten metal was poured. The worship in Egypt of sacred live bulls (Apis at Memphis especially) may have suggested this calf, or it may have been a memory of the worship of bulls in Chaldea, the ancient home of the Hebrews, where the bull idols, winged and with human heads, symbolized God's strength, wisdom, and omnipresence. **Made it a molten calf.** A little later, when Moses was hot against Aaron for this sin, Aaron made the paltry excuse, "I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf" (v. 24), as if he would have Moses believe a miracle had been wrought. Moses knew too well, by his own experience, that the gods of Egypt worked no miracles.

HOW WE IMITATE AARON. "I didn't break it," says the child, "it broke itself." So when a young man of evil life loses his health, he talks sadly of mysterious providences, and says nothing about his dissipation. So when a lazy man fails in business, he ascribes his bankruptcy to competition and "business complications." Phillips Brooks said once: "We are all ready to lay the blame on the furnaces. Everywhere there is this cowardly casting off of responsibilities upon the dead circumstances around us."

And they said, These be thy gods, O Israel. Rather, *thy god*, as before. The idol was proclaimed as an image of the true God, as if the people would break the second commandment, but not the first. But they had broken the first commandment in their hearts, and soon went on to worship the idol as God (1 Cor. 10: 7; Acts 7: 41; Psa.

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5. And when Aar'on saw *it, this,* he built an altar before it; and Aar'on made [1] proclamation, and said, *To morrow is To-morrow shall be* a feast to the LORD.

6. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the [2] people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

[1] Lev. 23: 2. [2] 1 Cor. 10: 7.

106: 19). **Which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.** One would think that the very utterance of these words would have turned the people back to gratitude and obedience to God. What a chance here for Aaron to have reminded the people of all that Jehovah had done for them!

5. **And when Aaron saw** it (this). Saw in what light the people viewed the image. **He built an altar before it.** Never think, when you take a start in idol-worship, that you will stop there. The idol must have an altar. The altar must have an offering. The whole must have a temple. Every sin is self-perpetuating. Begin to love money more than God, and the great idol of mammon will soon make a temple of your life. **And Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is** (shall be) **a feast to the Lord.** God was still to be worshiped, but under the form of a calf, and with the impure rites of a pagan religion. Probably Aaron thought he was very shrewd in thus saving for God what he could of honor and reverence.

ILLUSTRATIONS. So those that bow before crucifixes, images, paintings, relics, altars, shrines, plead that they do it as an aid to the worship of the true God.

So Jehu boasted of his zeal for the Lord of hosts while he was worshiping the golden calves of Jeroboam (2 Kings 10: 16, 29).

Those that have truly led the world are men like Moses and Paul, that would starve rather than become in any way connected with idolatry.

6. **And they rose up early on the morrow.** The idol-worshipers, the mammon-worshipers, rise early, and we, too, must rise early to succeed with "our Father's business," to get time for prayer and Bible study and a useful, active life. **And offered burnt offerings.** The burnt offering was a completely consumed sacrifice, and signified absolute surrender to what was worshiped. **And the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.** "They ate of the remains of the peace offerings," the burnt offerings being wholly consumed. The "play" was not merely singing and dancing, but in all idol-worship it included, also, the most indecent revels.

MODERN APPLICATIONS. Many think that worldliness is all feasting and fun, while religion is all fasting and seriousness. But every one *that has tried both* is eager to testify that there is more real pleasure in a day of the Christian life than in years of worldliness and idolatry.

An eloquent picture of modern idolatry and its consequences is put in the mouth of the wise old German, Dr. Habicht, in Boyesen's novel, *The Golden Calf:* "It is a pitiful sight to see a great people dance like de Shews of old, about de Golden Calf. Dis ravenous hunger for gold, which lurks in de bottom of every American soul — dat is a plague, a blight, a deadly fungus, which kills de germ of every noble endeafor. Vhat fouler, vhat meaner ideal can a man cherish dan de mere desire to fill his stomach mit good tings, und bedeck his body mit fine clodes, und shtrut like a peacock und flaunt his riches in de face of the vorld? Vhat real greatness can a soul harbor vhich is taken up mit sometings so small und contemptible? Vat vordy aim can shtrike root in so barren a soil? Notting but tistles und great prickly, noxious weeds."

III. **The Punishment of Disobedience.** — Vs. 7–29. Moses, on the mount, learned from God himself how the people had sinned. To test him, God offered to destroy the nation and make Moses the second Abraham of a new and greater people. Moses stood the test, rejected the tempting offer, and urged upon God three pleas for mercy: that if the people were destroyed (1) all that God had done for them would be fruitless; (2) the Egyptians would mock at Jehovah; (3) the promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would be unfulfilled. These entreaties prevailed, and Moses hastened down the mountain side, with Joshua, who had been waiting for him. Soon they came in sight of the abominable idol, and the frenzied worshipers dancing, half naked, around it.

The Tables Broken. Indignantly, Moses imposed on the people three punishments. FIRST. He shivered into fragments the stone blocks on which God himself had inscribed the Ten Commandments, the act being a symbol of their breach

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30. And it came to pass on the morrow, that Mō'ses said unto the people, [1] Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; [2] peradventure I shall [3] make [an] atonement for your sin.

31. And Mō'ses [4] returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have [5] made them gods of gold.

[1] 1 Sam. 12: 20; Luke 15: 18.
[2] 2 Sam. 16: 12.
[3] Num. 25: 13.
[4] Deut. 9: 18.
[5] Ex. 20: 23.

of the covenant. The Jewish writers imagined that these tables were sapphire. At any rate, they were infinitely precious.

SECOND PUNISHMENT. Moses then burned the golden calf, and ground it to powder. It is almost impossible to pulverize pure gold, but the act was made easily possible, probably, by alloys present in the jewelry from which the idol had been made (Du Bois). The Israelites were then compelled to "swallow their sin," for Moses scattered the dust of the idol on the only water which the people had to drink (Deut. 9: 21). This act also was a symbol, exhibiting the powerlessness of the idol, and the pervasiveness of their sin. Josiah, centuries afterward, gave the nation a similar object-lesson (2 Kings 23: 6, 12).

The Idol Destroyed.

We must all admire the boldness of Moses, one man against a nation. "Let him who has been before the face of God show that he does not fear the face of man." — *Oosterzee.*

THIRD PUNISHMENT. It was Aaron's turn next, and Moses administered to him a stinging rebuke, afterward praying to God to forgive him (Deut. 9: 20). Then Moses turned to the third punishment of the people. He summoned to him all that were on the Lord's side, and when the Levites, Moses' own tribe, responded, he sent them throughout the camp to slay the leaders in the idolatrous movement. Even their own brothers and sons they were to kill, thus consecrating themselves (v. 29), setting themselves apart for the sacred priesthood. Only a few hours before, Moses had been interceding with God for the people. "He himself" (Chadwick) "felt it needful to cut deep, in mercy, and doubtless in wrath as well, for true affection is not limp and nerveless." Furthermore, it must be remembered that not a man need have been slain; all could have accepted Moses' summons, "Who is on the Lord's side?" and have found pardon.

The Idolaters Slain.

For a hint of still other punishments meted out to the disobedient people, see vs. 34, 35.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS. How little did Aaron think that his weak compliance would lead to this tragedy! "Every sin has consequences which stretch through eternity. When Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom, he little thought that in Sodom itself he should leave all his property, and his whole family, save his two daughters." — *Wm. M. Taylor, D.D.*

"'Who is on the Lord's side?' is the question put to all souls in great test hours. On the Lord's side, even against yourselves, when yourselves need cleansing." — *Mrs. Whitney.*

IV. **Interceding for the Disobedient.** — Vs. 30–34. 30. **And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin.** Not all the guilty, therefore, had been slain, but only the leaders in the idolatry. And Moses meant for the others to understand that, though they were spared, they were still beneath God's dread displeasure. **And now I will go up unto the Lord.** "What!" Aaron may have exclaimed, "Leave the people now, of all times, just after they have shown how fickle they are?" "Yes," answers the great leader, "for it is not I that am leading, it is God; and the more fearful and unexpected the difficulty, the more need of retiring to seek orders from him." **Peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin.** "Already the holy mystery of atonement was moving between man and God." — *Mrs. Whitney.* The entire New Testament is foreshadowed in this sentence! "What is the future," Moses implied, "so long as we have this dreadful past? How can we do better, till we have got clean from this wrong-doing?" That is the word which every sinner needs.

31. **And Moses returned unto the Lord,** on Mount Sinai, **and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin.** "The Scriptures deal but sparingly in such interjectional phrases as the present, and wherever they occur they indicate the most profound emotion in the speaker." — *Bush.* No one should be able to look calmly on a sin.

THE MINISTRY OF INTERCESSION. One of the Christian's chief duties is to pray for others, and this is a duty very often neglected. It is our duty because (1) it is following in Christ's footsteps; (2) it ennobles the one that prays; (3) it wins actual results in the saving of men. See Andrew Murray's *The Ministry of Intercession* (Revell).

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32. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin —; and if not, [1] blot me, I pray thee, [2] out of thy book which thou hast written.

33. And the LORD said unto Mō'ses, [3] Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.

34. Therefore / And now go, lead the people unto *the place* of which I have spoken unto thee: [4] behold, mine Angel / angel shall go before thee: nevertheless [5] in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them.

35. And the LORD plagued / smote the people, because [6] they made the calf, which Aar'on made.

[1] Psa. 69: 28; Rom. 9: 3.
[2] Psa. 56: 8; Phil. 4: 3.
[3] Lev. 23: 30; Ezek. 18: 4.
[4] Ex. 33: 2, 14; Num. 20: 16.
[5] Deut. 32: 35; Rom. 2: 5, 6.
[6] 2 Sam. 12: 9; Acts 7: 41.

32. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin —. "Supply after the word 'sin,' 'well and good,' 'I am content,' or some such phrase. Similar instances of omissions due to strong emotion will be found in Dan. 3: 15; Luke 13: 9." — *Rawlinson.* "There is the power as of a sob in this broken utterance." — *Taylor.* "This is one of the most pathetic verses of the Bible." — *Rev. F. B. Meyer.* Moses felt it was almost dishonoring God to ask him to forgive so great a sin. In our Christian familiarity with the mercy of God, we are likely to take the forgiveness of our sins too much as a matter of course.

And if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. "The phraseology is in allusion, probably, to the custom of having the names of a community enrolled in a register, and whenever one died, of erasing his name from the number." — *Bush.*

THE SPIRIT OF THE ATONEMENT. Chadwick, and other commentators, consider that Moses meant merely, "If my people must perish, let me die with them." Many scholars, however, believe that Moses, like Paul (Rom. 9: 3), was willing that his name might be erased from the book of eternal life (Psa. 69: 28; Rev. 3: 5), if only his people might be saved. And this was said by the man to whom heaven meant more than to any man, probably, that yet had lived! However we interpret the prayer, it is a real anticipation of one of the chief characteristics of Christianity, the eagerness to suffer for others. Says Oosterzee: "One prayer like this would be sufficient to secure a name and fame for Moses through all time." And he adds: "Does it not seem as if Israel were borne upon the wings of prayer, by all the most illustrious men of God, over successive abysses?" (Samuel, Hezekiah, Isaiah, Daniel, etc.)

33. And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. "The soul that sinneth, *it* shall die," men still say (Ezek. 18: 4), and they ask how the death of a sinless Christ can help us out of that dilemma. It is answered by Christ's great heart of love and sympathy, that took upon itself, in Gethsemane and on the cross, all our sins, and prepared for them such an atonement as no mere man, not even Moses, could possibly furnish. As the Mount of Beatitudes interpreted the law of Sinai, so this great problem of Sinai was solved by Calvary.

Mercy and Justice.

34. Now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee. At the burning bush (Ex. 3: 8) God had told Moses where he was to lead the Hebrews. **Behold, mine angel shall go before thee.** Some celestial subordinate, and no longer God himself. Read in Ex. 33 how Moses won from God a renewed promise of his personal presence. **Nevertheless in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them.** "The weary waiting in the wilderness for forty years may have been a part of the punishment." — *Rawlinson.* The Jews have a tradition that *at least one ounce* of the powder of the golden calf has been mingled in each of their later calamities. God knows when to punish.

> "Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small;
> Though with patience he stands waiting, with exactness grinds he all."
> — *Longfellow.*

35. And the Lord plagued the people, because they made the calf. Some think he sent a pestilence. More likely, this refers to the slaughter already described or to the later disasters of the nation. America is still suffering for its sin of slave-holding. Russia

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will long suffer for its sins in Siberia. **Which Aaron made.** "*Deos qui rogat, ille facit,* He who asks for gods, makes them." — *Bush.* Aaron, to his shame, was only a puppet in the hands of the people. They were as guilty as if they also had made the calf. Every man is responsible to the extent of his influence. An earthquake may do more damage by the tidal wave it starts than by its own direct concussion.

V. **The Disobedient Restored.** — The next two chapters of Exodus describe the restoring of Israel to God's favor, in three particulars: (1) the pitching of the Tent of Meeting outside the camp; (2) the definite promise of God's presence, confirmed by a partial view of the divine majesty as Moses stood in the cleft of the rock; and (3) God's new covenant with Moses, confirmed by a renewing of the stone tables, and by such blessed communion through the second forty days that Moses' face wore a supernatural radiance, though he knew it not, when he returned to his penitent people. So will it be with us, after our sinning, if we will honestly repent, and seek through Christ, our intercessor greater than Moses, the merciful pardon of God.

LESSON V. — August 3.

THE TABERNACLE. — Exodus 40: 1–13.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise.*** — PSA. 100 : 4.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Arouse Attention by asking what is the greatest tower ever erected; the greatest bridge, lighthouse, palace, church. Then, what is the greatest *tent* of history? Undoubtedly, the tabernacle.

Draw, as you take up each point, the ground plan of the tabernacle, and provide the class with pencil and paper that they may copy your drawing step by step.

There are Three Questions to ask about the tabernacle and each piece of furniture: its form? its use? its meaning?

Review by getting the class to draw slips of paper on which you have written "ark," "mercy seat," "court," "veil," "laver," etc. Each is to stand a "quiz" by the class in regard to the object whose name he holds.

Close by a very earnest and detailed presentation of Christ as fulfilling in himself all the prophecies implied in the tabernacle.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

Subjects to be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

Lessons to be learned from the tabernacle.
Why did God give Moses so many details of the tabernacle?
Our gifts to God's house.
How the tabernacle pointed forward to Christ.
Why was so much wealth lavished on the tabernacle?
Benefits the Israelites gained from the tabernacle.
What one would see on passing through the tabernacle in order.

LEARN BY HEART.

Ex. 40: 1–3; Psa. 122: 1; Psa. 84: 10.

THE SECTION.

The full description of the tabernacle and its furniture in Ex. 25: 1 to 28: 43; 30: 1–21; 36: 1 to 39: 41, and of the anointing in Ex. 29: 1–37; 30: 21–38; Lev. 8: 1–30. The discussion of the tabernacle and priesthood as types of Christ in Heb. 9 and 10.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. — The Hebrews left Egypt on the first month, fourteenth day; they arrived at Sinai in the third month. Moses' two absences in the mount occupied nearly three months, so that the work on the tabernacle was begun in the seventh month, and completed during the remainder of the year. The tabernacle was dedicated on the first day of the new year, on the first of Abib (called also Nisan), B. C. 1490 — the latter part of March or early in April.

Place. — The plain, Er-Râhah, at the foot of Mount Sinai.

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LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: A Lesson in Worship.

I. WORSHIP MUST BE DIRECTED BY GOD (Ex. 25: 9, 40).
The pattern in the mount.

II. WORSHIP MUST COST SOMETHING (Ex. 25: 1–9).
Gifts for the tabernacle.

III. WORSHIP MUST CENTER AROUND GOD'S HOUSE (vs. 1, 2).
The tabernacle, or tent of meeting.

IV. WORSHIP IS BASED UPON GOD'S MERCY (v. 3).
The ark. The mercy seat. The veil.

V. WORSHIP MUST ENTER ALL DETAILS OF LIFE (v. 4).
The table of shewbread.

VI. WORSHIP FED FROM HIDDEN SOURCES MUST LEAP FORTH IN SERVICE (v. 4).
The candlestick.

VII. WORSHIP IS IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT PRAYER (v. 5).
The altar of incense.

VIII. WORSHIP REQUIRES A WHOLE-HEARTED SURRENDER (v. 6).
The altar of burnt offering.

IX. WORSHIP DEMANDS A PURE LIFE (v. 7).
The laver.

X. WORSHIP CALLS FOR SEPARATION FROM WORLDLINESS (v. 8).
The court.

XI. WORSHIP INVOLVES AN OPEN DEDICATION TO GOD (vs. 9–11).
The anointing.

XII. WORSHIP NEEDS LEADERS (vs. 12, 13).
The priesthood.
The consecration.
The holy garments.

XIII. THE TABERNACLE A TYPE OF CHRIST.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

Commentaries on Exodus, especially Chadwick's. Seven eloquent chapters in Parker's *People's Bible* (Funk & Wagnalls). *The Tabernacle and the Temple*, by Thomas Newberry (Hodder & Stoughton); *The Tabernacle of Israel*, a very valuable work, by James Strong ($5.00, Harris, Jones & Co., Providence, R. I.). Cook's *Commentary*, especially on the construction of the tabernacle, the colors used, and the Urim and Thummim. *Panorama of the Tabernacle and Its Services* and *Christ in the Tabernacle*, by Frank White (London, S. W. Partridge & Co.). Stanley's *History of the Jewish Church* (Scribners), vol. I., lecture VII. Chapter XI. in Mrs. Whitney's *The Open Mystery;* Chapter XVIII. in Hamilton's *Moses, the Man of God;* "Tabernacle-Building," in F. B. Meyer's *Moses, the Servant of God.* "Milestones in Religious History," by Rev. T. W. Davies, in *The Biblical World* for July, 1897, discusses the tabernacle from the higher critical standpoint. "Spinning in the Wilderness," by Mary Rowles, in *The Poets' Bible* (Ward, Lock & Bowden). "Sonnets on the Types," by Richard Wilton, in *Lyrics Sylvan and Sacred.* George Herbert's poem "Aaron." Article by Professor Strong in *The Biblical World*, April, 1893. *The Tent of Meeting*, by G. Woolworth Colton (75 cts., G. W. & C. B. Colton & Co.). Edersheim's *Exodus and the Wanderings in the Wilderness*, vol. II. (Ira Bradley & Co.). *Studies in the Mosaic Institutions*, by W. G. Moorehead, D. D. ($1.25, W. J. Shuey). *Solomon's Temple*, etc., by T. O. Paine, LL.D. *The Temples of the Jews*, by James Fergusson. *History and Significance of the Sacred Tabernacle of the Hebrews*, by Edward E. Atwater (Dodd & Mead).

God had taught his people three lessons in the wilderness training school, — trust, duty, obedience. Next came a lesson in worship, for worship must strengthen trust, point out duty, and make obedience possible. It was impossible that the Israelites should become a strong nation, able to conquer Canaan, without regular worship of God, and regular worship required a house of God. Therefore Moses was next commanded to build the tabernacle.

I. **The Pattern. Worship must be directed by God.** — Moses did not build the tabernacle according to his own fancy. Again and again (Ex. 25: 9, 40; 26: 30, etc.) he says it was done according to "the pattern shown in the mount." This was not a carved model or a plan on paper, but it was an ideal that God impressed on the prophet's mind. "Moses was no more left to settle the plan and the furniture than Noah was left to settle the colors of the rainbow." — *Joseph Parker.* So we must learn from God how to worship, if we would worship acceptably; and that is one of the chief reasons for studying the Bible.

II. **The Gifts. Worship must cost Something.** — The first step toward the building of the tabernacle was the giving of gifts (Ex. 25: 1–9). (1) A great variety was called for, and those that were too poor to give jewels, gold, silver, or bronze, could give spices,

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1. And the LORD spake unto Mō'ses, saying,
2. On the first day of the [1] first month shalt thou [set rear] up [2] the tabernacle of the tent of [the congregation. meeting.]

[1] Ex. 12: 2. [2] V. 17; Ex. 26: 1, 30.

oil, skins, or linen, or help cut the boards. There is room in God's house and about his tasks for all persons, and all degrees of talent. (2) The gifts must be willing ones, from the heart (Ex. 25: 2). Indeed, after the people's great sin and forgiveness they gave more than enough, and had to be restrained from giving (Ex. 35: 21, 29; 36: 5–7). Edersheim estimates the value of their gold and silver gifts alone at more than a million dollars, and money was then ten times as valuable as it is now.

CHEERFUL GIVING REQUIRED. "In Tahiti a person brought a quantity of cocoanut oil to King Pomare, exclaiming in a very bad spirit, 'Here are five bamboos of oil; take them for your missionary society.' The churlish giver was greatly surprised when Pomare pushed aside his offering with the rebuke, 'I cannot mix your angry bamboos with God's oil, so take them away.'" — *Procter*.

And the workers' hearts grew tender
In this gladsome self-surrender,
And the dreary toil of bondage, which their souls had so abhorred,
Was forgotten in the splendor
Of this service for the Lord!
— *Mary Rowles*.

LIBRARY. A fine passage in Ruskin's *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, "The Lamp of Sacrifice," sections 3–7.

III. **The Tabernacle. Worship must center around God's House.** — Vs. 1, 2. **1. And the Lord spake unto Moses,** after the people, by six or eight months of work, had carried out the instructions God gave Moses, and completed the tabernacle.



The Tabernacle.

2. On the first day of the first month. "The New Year's Day of the first year of freedom." — *Rawlinson*. See "Time." **Shalt thou set up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting.** Rather (Rawlinson), "the tabernacle, the tent of meeting," the two words being in apposition. The word "tabernacle" is from the Latin *tabernaculum*, "a tent." Why a tent? Because a stone temple could not have been carried with them, and God would have their religion portable. Why the tent "of meeting"? Because God met his people there, through the high priest, their representative. The Authorized Version, "tent of the congregation," gives a wrong impression.

WHAT WAS THE TABERNACLE? "The tabernacle was the most superb building of the kind ever reared by man." — *Rev. F. B. Meyer*. And yet its form was that of an ordinary tent, held firm by tent-pegs, and with no floor save the ground. Five tent-poles in front and five behind constituted its framework, joined together, possibly, by a ridge-pole. The roof was of goats'-hair cloth, sloping down on either side. It was buttoned by knobs to the Mishkan, the "dwelling" proper. This was a close fence of shittim wood, forty-five feet by fifteen, and fifteen feet high. Shittim, the only wood used in the tabernacle, is a species of acacia, described by Tristram as "a gnarled and thorny tree, the wood hard and close-grained, of an orange color, with a darker heart, well adapted for cabinet work." Taking the cubit at eighteen inches, each board was two feet three inches broad, and was probably made of smaller boards joined together, the joints being covered by gold plate within and without. There were forty-eight of these boards, and each corner board was probably halved and fastened together at right angles, to box the structure in. Every board was set, by tenon and mortise, in two silver sockets sunk in the ground. The latter weighed a talent each (more than eighty pounds), so that the foundation alone cost about a sixth of a million dollars. Bars of shittim wood bound the fence firmly together, and it was protected from the weather by a double covering of rams' skins dyed red and the skins of seals or porpoises. (So Professor Strong, though other scholars stretch these

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3. And [1] thou shalt put therein the ark of the testimony, and
cover
thou shalt screen the ark with the veil.
veil.

[1] V. 21; Ex. 26: 33; Num. 4: 5.

covers over the roof.) On the east there were no boards, their place being taken by a rich hanging.

Inside, the tent was adorned by a curtain of fine linen, blue and purple (crimson) and scarlet, woven with figures of cherubim. This curtain, according to Professor Strong, hung vertically upon the walls; others think it was an inner roof, and Colton considers it a special roof and wall covering for the Holy of Holies. "The veil," a curtain of the same material, hung from four pillars, divided the inner space into two apartments. The outer, toward the entrance, was the Holy Place, where a priest entered daily to serve the table, the altar of incense, and the candlestick. It was thirty feet long. The inner, toward the west, was the Most Holy Place, entered only by the high priest, and by him only once a year. It contained the ark, and was a cube, fifteen feet each way.

THE MEANING OF THE TABERNACLE. (1) The tabernacle taught the Israelites the value of a stated time and place for worship. Churches do that for us. (2) "The tabernacle was a perpetual protest against idolatry, — a center and rallying-point to monotheistic worship." — *Hamilton*. (3) The tabernacle symbolized the abiding presence of God with his people; so does the church. Everything about the tabernacle, as will be seen, was typical, pointing forward to the time when "the word became flesh, and dwelt" — literally, *tabernacled* — "among us." Every Christian church is a tabernacle fulfilled.

LIBRARY. On *tabernacled* see Peloubet's *Suggestive Illustrations*, *John*, p. 19. Also Ruskin's *Deucalion*, chap. 7.

IV. **The Ark. Worship is based upon God's Mercy.** — V. 3. **And thou shalt put therein the ark of the testimony.** The ark was a chest of shittim wood, overlaid with gold within and without, three feet nine inches long, two feet three inches broad and deep. That no hand need touch it in its journeys, two staves were permanently inserted in four rings at the side. About its upper edge was a rim of gold, to hold in place the lid, which was of solid gold. The weight of this lid has been estimated at seven hundred and fifty pounds Troy, and its value at $125,000. It was the central figure of the tabernacle, because above it, between the cherubim, flamed forth the visible Presence of God, the mysterious Shekinah. The cherubim, which rose on either hand, were of one piece with the mercy seat of pure gold, beaten work. Cherubim were "imaginary figures" (Hastings), "of no certain crystallized form and shape" (*The Nation*, Aug. 5, 1875). In this case, as Ladd says, "their general aspect and proportions were probably human." They had wings outstretched above and meeting over the mercy seat, while their faces gazed downward in adoration. They may be considered as "guardians of the divine holiness" (Taylor), or as "a symbolical representation of the redeemed" (Crawford).



Ark of the Covenant.

LIBRARY. Articles on the cherubim in *Bibliotheca Sacra* by Rev. George T. Ladd (1876) and Prof. John Crawford, D.D. (1879).

THE MEANING OF THE ARK. It was called "the ark of the testimony," because it contained the stone tables of the law, which were called "the tables of testimony" (Ex. 31: 18) because they testified of God's will, and also testified against the people (Deut. 31: 26) because they so often broke the law. There were laid in it (or before it, according to Stanley and others) a pot of manna and Aaron's rod which budded (Heb. 9: 4), tokens of God's goodness of which they were so unworthy. But above these signs of their sin was the great golden slab which hid them from the eye of God, the dazzling Shekinah. That is why the cover of the ark is called the mercy seat. All Christian, as well as all Jewish, worship is based on this thought of the forgiveness of sins, which comes through the Messiah. It is only with this thought that we dare present ourselves before God. No wonder the cherubim, representing God's forgiven people, gazed in rapture upon the mercy seat!

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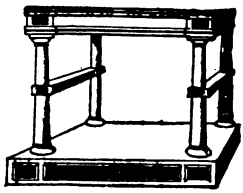
4. And [1]thou shalt bring in the table, and [2]set in order [a]the things that are [to be set in order] upon it; [3]and thou shalt bring in the candlestick, and light the lamps thereof.

[1] V. 22; Ex. 26: 35.
[2] V. 23; Ex. 25: 30; Lev. 24: 5, 6.
[3] Vs. 24, 25.
a Hebrew, *the order thereof.*

And thou shalt cover the ark with the veil. The veil was to be fashioned like the inner tabernacle covering, of fine linen, blue and purple (crimson) and scarlet, woven cunningly with cherubim. It was drawn before the ark to screen it from careless gaze.

LIBRARY. Ruskin on "the sacred chord of color," *Modern Painters*, vol. IV., chap. 3, section 24.

V. **The Table of Shewbread. Worship must enter All Details of Life.** — V. 4. **And thou shalt bring in the table.** The table of shewbread was commonly called simply "the table." It stood on the north side of the tabernacle, to the right as one faced the veil. It was made of acacia wood, gold-plated, and measured two feet three inches high, a yard long, and half a yard broad. It was ornamented with a raised edge and a golden band connecting the legs. Rings for the carriers' staves were near the feet, that it might be raised above their shoulders (Rawlinson). The table contained two gold dishes, each with six loaves of bread piled one above another (Hastings), while on top of each pile was a small golden saucer of frankincense. The twelve loaves were for the twelve tribes. They were renewed every Sabbath, the stale bread being eaten by the priests on the spot, or burned on the brazen altar (Strong). Mention is made (Ex. 25: 29) of "flagons and bowls," which were for the wine that always accompanied a meal offering.


Table for Shewbread.

THE MEANING OF THE TABLE. (1) The bread and wine typified (Chadwick) "the consecration of secular life." "Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do," we are to do all to the glory of God. We can truly worship God in all our common work.

"A servant, with this clause,
Makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room, as by God's laws,
Makes that, and the action, fine."
— *George Herbert.*

(2) The shewbread was a token of gratitude, implying that all good things come from God. (3) The frankincense that covered the bread (Lev. 24: 7), signifying prayer, was an unworded anticipation of the Lord's Prayer: "Give us this day our daily bread," and of the Christian custom of "grace before meat." (4) The entire table, with its bread and wine, was a wonderful prophecy of the Lord's Supper.

VI. **The Candlestick. Worship, fed from Hidden Sources, must leap forth in Service.** — V. 4. **And thou shalt bring in the candlestick, and light the lamps thereof.** This "candlestick," or lampstand, was beaten into shape from a talent of pure gold, worth $28,000. It stood on the south side of the Holy Place, opposite the table of shewbread. Our best idea of it, as of the table, comes from the Arch of Titus, where it was represented as a straight central stem with three branches on either side, curving up to the same level. Seven lamps, which were hemispherical bowls of oil with the wick passing through a sort of lip, completed the seven stems. These burned all night, the high priest lighting them at evening (Ex. 27: 21; 30: 7, 8). All parts were adorned with representations of almond flowers, pomegranates, and lily blossoms, and it was accompanied by golden "tongs" for trimming the wicks, and "snuff dishes" to receive the burned pieces.


Golden Candlestick.

THE MEANING OF THE CANDLESTICK. (1) Zechariah's vision (Zech. 4: 2–12) of the lamps ever fed by the two olive-trees unfolds the chief lesson of the tabernacle candlestick, "that of luster derived from supernatural, invisible sources." "A lamp gives light not because the gold shines, but because the oil burns" (Chadwick); and so the Christian is to live, "not by might, nor by power," not by wealth or position or worldly lore, "but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." (2) We are to let

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5. [1] And thou shalt set the altar of gold (golden altar) for the incense before the ark of the testimony, and put the hanging (screen) of the door to the tabernacle.

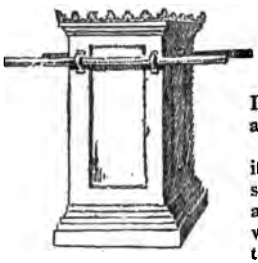
6. And thou shalt set the altar of the burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation (meeting).

[1] V. 26.

our light shine, as Christ bade us. No one is a Christian if no one else knows it. (3) We are to give out clear, *perfect* light, seven being a sign of perfectness. (4) We are to remember that as the seven candlesticks of John's vision (Rev. 1: 12, 13) had in their midst the Son of man, so all Christians are to walk with Christ, and be lights of the world because he is the Light of the world.

LIBRARY. Spurgeon's *Morning by Morning*, p. 241.

VII. **The Altar of Incense. Worship is Impossible without Prayer.** — V. 5. **And thou shalt set the altar of gold for incense before the ark of the testimony.** This altar, of acacia wood overlaid with gold, was smaller than the bronze altar, as a more costly material was offered upon it. It was half a yard square and a yard high. It had horns at the corners, a raised edge around the top, and two golden rings for the staves by which it was carried. Its office connected it closely with the ark, and it was placed directly opposite, though on the other side of the veil, in the Holy Place. Incense of a special composition was to be offered upon it in a censer at the morning and evening sacrifices.



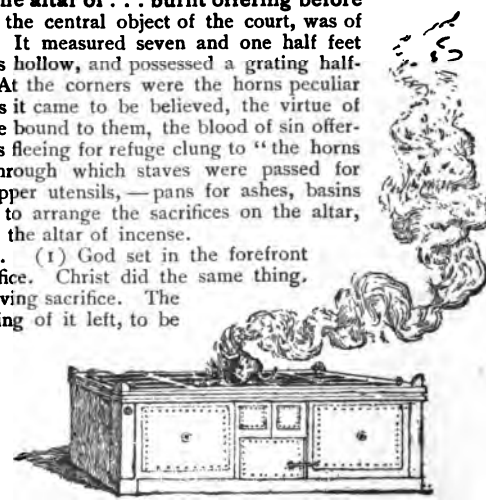
Altar of Incense.

THE MEANING OF THE INCENSE. (1) The fragrance of incense, its preciousness, and its beautiful clouds rising to heaven make it a suitable symbol for prayer. The heathen religions used it, but God adopted it into the true religion. (2) Incense represents praise as well as prayer, adoring as well as imploring. It is a good rule never to offer a petition till you have offered thanksgiving. (3) Incense was a type of the prayers made constantly for us by Christ, our great Intercessor.

And put the hanging (screen) **of the door to the tabernacle.** Eastern tent doors must be provided with curtains to shut out the heat and glare of the sun. The screen at the tabernacle entrance was a beautifully wrought hanging, fastened by gold hooks to five golden pillars, thus dividing the entrance into four parts.

VIII. **The Altar of Burnt Offering. Worship requires a Whole-hearted Surrender.**—V. 6. **And thou shalt set the altar of . . . burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle.** This altar, the central object of the court, was of acacia protected from the fire by bronze. It measured seven and one half feet square and four and one half feet high, was hollow, and possessed a grating half-way up within, on which rested the fire. At the corners were the horns peculiar to Israelite altars (Rawlinson), in which, as it came to be believed, the virtue of the altar was centered, so that victims were bound to them, the blood of sin offerings was sprinkled upon them, and criminals fleeing for refuge clung to "the horns of the altar." There were four rings through which staves were passed for carrying, and there were also provided copper utensils, — pans for ashes, basins for the blood of the sacrifices, flesh-hooks to arrange the sacrifices on the altar, and firepans to carry coals from this altar to the altar of incense.

THE MEANING OF BURNT OFFERINGS. (1) God set in the forefront of his symbolic church the symbol of sacrifice. Christ did the same thing. His disciples must offer themselves as a living sacrifice. The burnt offering was an entire offering, nothing of it left, to be eaten by priest or people. It is no half-way offering that Christ wants, but the whole life. (2) This altar was for all the people. They had access to it, though not to the tabernacle. Thus in every point it looked forward to Christ, the one Sacrifice for the sins of all men.



Altar of Burnt Offering.

IX. **The Laver. Worship demands a Pure Life.** — V. 7. **And thou shalt**

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7. And [1] thou shalt set the laver between the tent of [the congregation meeting] and the altar, and shalt put water therein.

8. And thou shalt set up the court round about, and hang up the [hanging at the court gate. screen of the gate of the court.]

9. And thou shalt take the anointing oil, and [2] anoint the tabernacle, and all that [is in is] therein, and shalt hallow it, and all the [vessels furniture] thereof: and it shall be holy.

10. And thou shalt anoint the altar of [the] burnt offering, and all [his its] vessels, and sanctify the altar: and [3] [it shall be an altar the altar shall be] [a] most holy.

[1] V. 30; Ex. 30: 18.
[2] Ex. 30: 26.
[3] Ex. 29: 36, 37.
a Hebrew, *holiness of holinesses.*

set the laver between the tent . . . and the altar. The laver was a huge urn, rising from a "foot," or pedestal. Newberry and Strong think that the upper part, or laver, was "a reservoir from which, when required, the water poured down into the foot or basin at its base, the lower part being alone used for bathing or washing." The women nobly surrendered their polished bronze mirrors, to furnish material for it. On penalty of death, the priests had to wash their feet and hands with water drawn from it before they entered the Holy Place or offered sacrifice, and therefore it was placed, as tradition says, between the entrance and the bronze altar.



The Laver.

THE MEANING OF THE LAVER. It signifies the purity needed for worship. (1) Physical purity. "Cleanliness is next to godliness," literally, in the tabernacle. City missionaries know that the dirt of the slums is largely responsible for the wickedness there. A clean body helps wonderfully toward a clean soul. (2) Mental and spiritual purity. An unclean thought, if harbored, soon befouls the whole life, and we all need to pray, "Create in us a clean heart, O God." (3) No one can cleanse himself. "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" is the world's prayer to Christ. Therefore the laver is a prophecy of "the blood of the Lamb."

X. **The Court. Worship calls for Separation from Worldliness.** — V. 8. **And thou shalt set up the court round about.** The court of the tabernacle was one hundred and fifty feet long, seventy-five feet broad, and seven and one-half feet high, and the tabernacle was in the middle of its western, or back, end. Its hangings were supported by silver hooks upon bronze-plated posts, set in bronze sockets, and firmly held together by silver rods. The court, like the tabernacle, opened toward the east, and the entrance was distinguished by a handsome hanging, thirty feet wide, "of blue and purple (crimson) and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework."

THE MEANING OF THE COURT. Probably the hangings of the court were so loosely woven of linen threads that they permitted the inner space to be seen from outside. Yet no Gentile was admitted, so that the court represented the separation of God's people from the world. It also indicated, to the worshipers within, their duty of shutting worldly distractions from their minds.

XI. **The Anointing. Worship involves an open Dedication to God.** — Vs. 9–11. **9. And thou shalt take.** The following instructions for the consecration of the tabernacle and its priests are fitly recorded here, though the execution of them seems to have been postponed, probably through lack of time (Lev. 8: 1–13). **The anointing oil.** The holy oil (Ex. 20: 23–25) was to be made of myrrh, cinnamon, "sweet calamus" (some unknown aromatic reed), cassia (whose flavor is much like cinnamon), and olive oil. The proportions of these were fixed, and the compounding was to be done with the utmost care. Oil of this composition was reserved solely for sacred uses. **And anoint the tabernacle, . . . and all the vessels thereof.** The consecration was to begin with the

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11. And thou shalt anoint the laver and his foot, its base, and sanctify it.

12. [1] And thou shalt bring Aar'on and his sons unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, tent of meeting, and shalt wash them with water.

13. And thou shalt put upon Aar'on the holy garments, [2] and thou shalt anoint him, and sanctify him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

[1] Lev. 8: 1–13. [2] Ex. 28: 41.



High Priest.

ark (Ex. 30: 26–29), and proceed outward, taking in order the contents of the Most Holy Place, the Holy Place, and the court.

THE MEANING OF ANOINTING. (1) It represented the dedication to God of the entire tabernacle. Not even the snuffers or the grate of the altar was omitted from the consecration. It is all or nothing with God. (2) The word "Christ" means "the Anointed One," and Christ's is the only life that fulfils in its perfect consecration the prophecies of the anointed tabernacle. (3) When men become Christians they receive "the anointing from on high," which dedicates them wholly to the unselfish uses of Christ's Kingdom.

XII. **The Priesthood. Worship needs Leaders.** — Vs. 12, 13. **12. And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons.** See Ex. 29; Lev. 8. In the patriarchal system each man was priest of his household. Now Aaron and all males of his line were to be made priests of the nation, the head of the family being always the high priest. **And wash them with water.** The consecration of Aaron and of succeeding high priests consisted (1) of washing at the laver, to signify purity; (2) of clothing him with the priestly garments; (3) of anointing with the holy oil, to betoken the full outpouring of God's grace upon him; (4) the sacrifice of a sin offering, a bullock, upon which Aaron laid his hands, thus symbolically transferring to it his sins; this being followed by the sacrifice of a ram as a whole burnt offering, indicating complete consecration; and (5) the killing of another ram, whose blood was placed on the tip of Aaron's right ear, his right thumb, and the great toe of his right foot, signifying that henceforth he was to listen to God's voice, hold God's possessions, and go on God's errands; this being followed by Aaron's first priestly service, wherein Moses placed in Aaron's hands portions of the ram's flesh, laid his own hands underneath Aaron's, and waved them to the four quarters of the sky, as an offering to the omnipresent Jehovah.

13. **And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments.** (1) First came the linen tunic, worn underneath all; (2) the under-girdle; (3) the outer robe of blue, around whose hem were alternate bells and pomegranates, the bells ringing with his every movement, warning of his approach that he might avoid ceremonial defilement, and allowing the people to follow their representative with the ear as he passed into the dread Holy of Holies; (4) the ephod, or waistcoat, of gold, blue, purple (crimson), scarlet, and fine linen, bearing on his shoulders two pieces of onyx set in gold, each engraved with the names of half the tribes, showing that the high priest represented his entire nation; (5) the "curious girdle of the ephod," which fastened together the front and back pieces, many-colored and gold-wrought; (6) the breastplate, a nine-inch square of linen, upon which shone twelve different gems, each engraved with the name of one of the tribes, Aaron thus bearing his nation on his heart; (7) the mysterious Urim and Thummim, "the Lights and the Perfections," unknown objects placed in the pocket of the breastplate, and used, in a way unknown to us, to learn the will of God; (8) the mitre, a white linen turban, bearing on its front, (9) attached by a blue cord, the climax of it all, the gold plate which was inscribed with the key-words of religion, "Holiness to the Lord." There was no covering for the feet. The subordinate priests were similarly attired, but without the ephod and its robe, and with a linen cap instead of the mitre.

"Holiness on the head,
Light and perfection on the breast,
Harmonious bells below raising the dead
To lead them unto life and rest.
Thus are true Aarons drest."
— *George Herbert.*

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LIBRARY. "The Hebrew Idea of Holiness," by J. J. Peters in *Biblical World*, November, 1899.

THE MEANING OF THE PRIESTHOOD. (1) It pointed forward in every detail to the coming of Christ, our great High Priest. This is fully explained in the ninth and tenth chapters of Hebrews. (2) Christian ministers continue the tabernacle services of Aaron and his sons, pointing men to Christ, leading men in prayer, and inciting them to offer their bodies a living sacrifice. They are to be revered, as standing in this noble succession. (3) There is a priesthood of believers. Every man should be a priest in his own house, at the family altar. Every mother should train her children for God. Every soul must enter its closet and offer its secret sacrifices of contrition, prayer, and praise.

THE WORK ACCEPTED. The remainder of the chapter (and of the book) relates how Moses set up the tabernacle, and how the divine glory descended upon it in token of approval and acceptance. So overpowering was the splendor that Moses could not enter the tabernacle. And henceforth through all their journeys the rising of this bright cloud from their sacred edifice was the token for the children of Israel that they should break camp and proceed on their way.

A PICTURE OF THE TABERNACLE. Suppose yourself approaching the tabernacle at some desert camping place. You would find it occupying a large reserved space in the center of the host of tents, which are arranged symmetrically around it, while the tents of Moses, Aaron, and the Levites guard it more closely. It is a brilliant sight, the white hangings of the court contrasting with the darker covering of the tabernacle within. The gorgeous entrance curtain is looped up, for the court is full of worshipers bringing sacrifices. White-robed priests are burning offerings at the large bronze altar in the center, while another is using the sacred laver near the tabernacle entrance, preparatory to entering. The many-colored curtain is here looped back from its golden pillars. From within we catch a gleam of golden table and exquisitely wrought lampstand, while a fragrance of rare incense floats out upon us. Deep in the recesses of the Holy Place we can see the resplendent curtain, and we tremble as it seems almost luminous with the shining of the Shekinah behind it. All is so reverently silent that we hear the chime of the bells on the high priest's garment as he moves forward, and, turning, we read above his beautiful robes and glittering breast and noble countenance the crown and meaning of it all, HOLINESS TO THE LORD.

LESSON VI. — August 10.

NADAB AND ABIHU. — Leviticus 10: 1–11.

TEMPERANCE LESSON.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Let us watch and be sober.* — 1 THES. 5: 6.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Arouse Interest by drawing a square to represent the five million dollars this country spends annually for foreign missions, and beside it a square 200 times as large to represent the thousand million dollars (and more) spent annually by this country for strong drink.

Review the lesson on the tabernacle by drawing a diagram of it, and mark the place where Nadab and Abihu were stricken down.

The Seven Temperance Lessons may be represented, as they are brought out one at a time, by seven strokes of red coming from the tabernacle and converging on the

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 8–11; 1 Cor. 10: 31; 3: 16, 17.

THE SECTION

includes the lesson, with a general glance at the book of Leviticus.

Leviticus (see Introduction) is so named because it is chiefly devoted to the duties of the Levites, who had charge of the whole system of sacrifices, feasts, etc. Chapters 8, 9, 10, and 24 are the only historical chapters.

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place where the young men stand, each line being appropriately marked.

Close with an earnest plea for a pure and temperate life.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

Leviticus, by S. H. Kellogg, D.D., in *The Expositor's Bible*, is the latest and best commentary on this book. Watson's *Numbers* in the *Expositor's Bible*, chap. 3. Various publications of the Committee of Fifty (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.). *The Temperance Problem and Social Reform*, by Rowntree and Sherwell ($2.00, Whittaker), is a comprehensive and up-to-date review of the reform all over the world. *The American Prohibition Year Book*, by Alonzo E. Wilson (15 cts., United Prohibition Press, Chicago), is a compact manual. *Facts about the Temperance Reform*, a useful pamphlet by Rev. William Parsons, Peoria, Ill. *Who Killed Joe's Baby?* a stirring temperance story by Charles M. Sheldon (10 cts., Advance Publishing Co.). *The Beauties of Temperance*, by Julia Colman, two vols. (28 cts. each, Eaton & Mains).

PRONUNCIATIONS.

Aar'ŏn (Ar'ŏn), Abī'hū, E'lĕā'zăr or Elē'ăzăr, Ĕl'ăphăn, Ith'ămăr, Mĭsh'ăĕl, Nā'dăb, Uzzī'ĕl or Uz'zĭĕl.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

Subjects to be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

The advantages Nadab and Abihu had enjoyed.
Reasons why God punished this sin so severely.
Reasons why Aaron was not permitted to mourn his sons' death.
Temperance lessons to be learned from this incident.
Why should every one sign a pledge of total abstinence?

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. April, B. C. 1490 (common chronology); on the afternoon (Lev. 10: 12, 19) of the first day that the priests entered upon the regular sacrifices of the tabernacle (Lev. 8: 33; 9:1), just after the week of consecration of the priests. It was just a year after the exodus.

Place. In the camp in the valley of Er-Râhah, before Mt. Sinai.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: A Temperance Lesson in the Wilderness Training School.

I. NADAB AND ABIHU: THE OPPORTUNITY OF TWO YOUNG MEN (v. 1, first part).
Opportunities of modern young men.
How intemperance is a bar to advancement.

II. STRANGE FIRE: HOW THE TWO YOUNG MEN LOST THEIR OPPORTUNITY (v. 1, second part).
Intemperance blunts the spiritual nature.
Intemperance and crime.

III. FIRE FROM GOD: THE FATAL RESULT OF SIN (v. 2).
A severe but just punishment.
Strong drink leads down to death.

IV. BROKEN LAWS AND BROKEN HEARTS (vs. 3–7).
Aaron's sorrowful resignation.
Intemperance involves the woe of the innocent.

V. TEMPERANCE LESSONS WRITTEN IN FLAME (vs. 8–11).
Strong drink injures all labor.
Intemperance is under God's eternal ban.
Intemperance destroys influence over others.

PICTURES.

Nadab and Abihu, Beale. *The Investiture of Aaron*, Signorelli (in the Sistine Chapel at Rome).

1. And [1] Nā'dăb and A-bī'hū, the sons of Aar'on, [2] took (either each) his censer, and put (put, laid) fire therein, and laid incense thereon, and offered [3] strange fire before the LORD, which he (had not) commanded them. (not.)

[1] Lev. 16: 1; Num. 3: 3, 4. [2] Lev. 16: 12; Num. 16: 18. [3] Ex. 30: 9.

The initial lessons in God's wilderness training school were those in trust, duty, obedience, and worship. The next event in their experience was a fracture of the law of worship brought about by drunkenness, so that the fifth lesson is one of temperance. The tabernacle had been dedicated, the priesthood solemnly established, fire had fallen from heaven upon the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord had entered the Most Holy Place to dwell above the mercy seat. It was while these solemn and impressive scenes were fresh in mind, probably even under their immediate excitement, that Nadab and Abihu committed their fatal sin.

I. **Nadab and Abihu. The Opportunity of Two Young Men.** — V. 1, first part. **And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron.** His oldest sons (Ex. 6: 23). The opportunity before these two young men was a noble and exalted one. "Oppor-

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tunity" means "an open door," and they had passed through three great portals of usefulness and happiness: (1) Their *parentage* was a fine advantage, because though Aaron had just proved himself weak in the matter of the golden calf, yet God had made him the religious leader of the people, and in character he stood high above all save Moses. And Moses was their uncle. (2) Their *education* was remarkable. They had spent a year in God's wilderness training school, receiving the lessons of the riven rock, the quails, the manna, the Law written on the tables of stone. Moreover, they had had the exalted privilege of beholding with their own eyes the glory of God upon the holy mount (Ex. 24: 1, 9, 10). Finally, (3) they had passed through the portal of a glorious *calling*. They had been dedicated to a sacred and most honorable trust. They wore the garments that separated them, in the eyes of all men, to the priest's life of holiness and obedience. Before each of them was even the thrilling possibility of becoming high priest some day. And in spite of it all, they fell.

FIRST TEMPERANCE LESSON: INTEMPERANCE DESTROYS OPPORTUNITIES. One of the strongest arguments for temperance lies in the opportunities open to young men and young women in our day. They far exceed those of Nadab and Abihu. "The world is all gates," says Marden. (1) *Wealth* is open to the poorest. Clark, who founded Clark University, got his start by making toy wagons in a horse shed. Andrew Carnegie was a poor boy. These are typical examples. (2) *Fame and power* are open to the most humble. Garfield, Lincoln, Henry Wilson, and Benjamin Franklin came from the so-called "lowest" walks of life. Beecher began as a country preacher at two hundred dollars a year. (3) *Learning* is within the reach of all. Edison started his experiments in a baggage car. Maria Mitchell, on a salary of seventy-five dollars a year, became a learned astronomer. Faraday began as a bottle-washer. (4) Best of all, *godliness and the highest usefulness* are possible for every one. Joan of Arc tended swine. Horace Mann braided straw to get money for books. Frances Willard had less opportunity than most girls. (5) But intemperance *shuts all these doors* in our face. It muddles the brain of the student, destroys the business man's judgment, cripples the influence of statesmen, throws the most brilliant scholar into the gutter. It is to no purpose that a lad is surrounded by these wonderful opportunities if he bars himself out of them by intemperance.

Closed Doors.

II. **Strange Fire: how the Two Young Men lost their Opportunity.** — V. 1, second part. **Took either of them his censer.** The censer was "the vessel used to carry the charcoal on which the incense was burned, a bowl-shaped implement furnished with a short handle." — *Hastings' Bible Dictionary*. **And put fire therein.** The coals should have been taken from the altar of burnt offering. **And put incense thereon.** The sacred incense, of a special composition (Ex. 30: 34–38), to be used only for the tabernacle service. It symbolized adoration and prayer. **And offered strange fire.** "Strange, that is, to the requirements of the law." — *Hastings' Bible Dictionary*. It is not certain whether their sin consisted in making the offering (1) in a *way* not commanded, taking the coals, not from the brazen altar, but elsewhere; or (2) at a *time* not commanded, since the divinely appointed order of worship for the day had been completed; or (3) in a *place* not commanded, venturing to press within the veil, into the presence of Jehovah himself. The emphasis laid on the fire, however, indicates that the young men, in drunken stupidity (see v. 9), took coals from some other source than the great altar, possibly from the fire at which the priests cooked the flesh from the sacrifices. **Before the Lord.** This may indicate the outer court (Lev. 1: 5) as well as the interior of the tabernacle; and, in fact, the young men seem to have perished in front of the entrance to the holy place (v. 5). **Which he commanded them not.** Rosenmüller says that this expression is frequently equivalent to "which he forbade"; and though we have no record of a law forbidding the use of strange fire except on the day of atonement (Lev. 16: 12), yet such a law might have existed (Lange).

STRANGE FIRE. ILLUSTRATIONS. "The essence of the sin of Nadab and Abihu was this, that it was will-worship; worship in which they consulted, not the revealed will of God regarding the way in which he would be served, but their own fancies and inclinations." — *Kellogg*. Saul sinned in the same way, and sought to excuse his sin by liberal offerings, but God taught him sharply that "to obey is better than sacrifice" (1 Sam. 15: 22).

We also use strange fire whenever we offer to God any service while he commands a different one. If we know that God wants us to teach a Sunday-school class, it is strange fire to substitute for that work singing in the choir. If we know that God wants us to confess to a man a wrong we have done him, it is strange fire to make him a present and omit

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2. And there [1] went out / came forth fire from before the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

[1] Lev. 9: 24; Num. 16: 35.

the confession. What we do matters little, if it is not done in obedience. It is strange fire, also, to lower any religious act to the standard of the world. This is done, for instance, when the church becomes a mere theater for the display of operatic singing, when money is given through ostentation, or when the spirit of caste separates Christians in their worship.

SECOND TEMPERANCE LESSON: INTEMPERANCE BLUNTS THE SPIRITUAL NATURE. The drinker soon *loses* both his *insight into God's will*, as Nadab and Abihu did, and his *ability to do it*. Julia Codman gives an illustration: "A man who was seeking religion in a protracted meeting seemed to start anew every night. In the morning when visited by his pastor he was as hard and indifferent as ever, yet in the evening meeting he would become penitent again. This went on until his pastor learned that at night when he went home he drank deeply. When he was induced to give up that practice his convictions became constant, and his conversion followed." Religion, being the best thing in the world, requires a man at his best to understand it and retain it; and a drunkard is always a man at his worst.

Crime and the Saloon.

There is not a *crime* that is not fostered by the saloon. The statistical editor of the Chicago *Tribune* declares that the saloons of the nation are responsible for more than 53,000 murders committed in this country during the past decade. Massachusetts statistics for 1895 show that of every 100 convicted of crime that year, 96.44 per cent. were users of strong drink. The Committee of Fifty, after careful investigation of 13,402 convicts, declare that intemperance was the cause of their crime in the case of 49.95 per cent. In 1899 *The New Voice* obtained the testimony of one thousand jailers, whose terms of office aggregated more than six thousand years, and they declared that 72 per cent. of the criminals then in their jails were brought there by drink.

Alcohol *weakens the will power*, so that the pitiable wretch cannot do right even when he longs to. A young man in Des Moines, Iowa, recently went before a justice of the peace and begged to be arrested for drunkenness and locked up, that he might get sober out of reach of the saloon's irresistible temptations; and the merciful judge sent him to jail.

Alcohol *destroys the natural affections*. One day a poor wife appeared in a Buffalo court and testified that her husband even stole the little shoes and the underclothing of his baby as she lay in the cradle, and sold them for a five-cent drink.

"Intemperance wipes out God's image, and stamps souls with the counterfeit die of the devil." — *John B. Gough.*

III. **Fire from God: the Fatal Result of Sin.** — V. 2. **And there went out fire.** A miraculous fire, like that which had just before approved Aaron's ministry by consuming his sacrifice (Lev. 9 : 24). This, as Keil says, is like Christ's gospel, which is life to the righteous and death to the wicked (2 Cor. 2: 16). **From** (before) **the Lord.** From the Shekinah resting on the tabernacle (Ex. 40: 34, 38). **And devoured them.** Killed them as with a stroke of lightning, without consuming even their clothes (v. 5).

WAS THIS PUNISHMENT JUST? Some have thought that this terrible penalty was too severe for the sin; but consider the following arguments (condensed from Dr. Kellogg): (1) We are ourselves sinners, and so are inclined to look on all sin too leniently. (2) There is no need of inferring that spiritual death followed the physical death inflicted on the two young men. The Bible says nothing about their eternal fate. (3) In ordinary natural life a moment's sinful indulgence may bring a life-time of bodily suffering, a sinful infraction of a natural law may result in crippling or death. To argue God out of the tenth of Leviticus is to argue him out of nature and history. (4) Nadab and Abihu had just been consecrated, and committed their sin in their priestly robes, and before all the assembly. The day's entire ceremony was intended as an object-lesson in the right mode of worship, and the people, all through history and even to the Pharisees of Christ's time, showed themselves prone to slight the divine order of worship and make additions or changes of their own. No one knows what excesses of idolatry and self-willed departures from the true religion were prevented by this startling punishment of Nadab and Abihu.

Similar cases, where the first offense was made an awful warning for the good of others, are the deaths of Uzzah (2 Sam. 6: 3–7), the Sabbath-breaker (Num. 15: 32–36), and Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5: 1–11).

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3. Then Mō'ses said unto Aar'on, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them [1] that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be [2] glorified. [3] And Aar'on held his peace.

4. And Mō'ses called Mĭsh'a-el and El'za-phăn, the sons of [4] Uz'zĭ-el the uncle of Aar'on, and said unto them, Come near, [5] carry your brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp.

5. So they went near, and carried them in their coats out of the camp; as Mō'ses had said.

6. And Mō'ses said unto Aar'on, and unto E-le-ā'zar and unto Ith'a-mar, his sons, [6] Uncover not your heads, Let not the hair of your heads go loose. neither rend your clothes; lest that ye die, not, and lest [7] wrath come upon that he be not wroth with all the people congregation: but let your brethren, the whole house of Is'ra-el, bewail the burning which the LORD hath kindled.

[1] Ex. 19: 22; Lev. 21: 6, 17, 21.
[2] Isa. 49: 3; John 13: 31; 2 Thes. 1: 10.
[3] Psa. 39: 9.
[4] Ex. 6: 18, 22; Num. 3: 19, 30.
[5] Luke 7: 12; Acts 5: 6, 9.
[6] Ex. 33: 5; Lev. 13: 45; Num. 6: 6, 7.
[7] Num. 16: 22.

THIRD TEMPERANCE LESSON: STRONG DRINK LEADS DOWN TO DEATH. God is constantly sending forth his fiery indignation against "fire water," as he sent forth his flames to rebuke false fire in the tabernacle. How terrible that men convert God's good gifts, which he designs as the fount of their life, into the cause of their just death! Men need a deeper sense of the might of God's anger; "its fire is not quenched."

The Fatal Results of Intemperance.

Aside from the *spiritual death*, alcohol leads swiftly to *physical death*. Strong drink works fatal injury to the human body. Thousands of eminent scientific men join with the celebrated physician, Sir Andrew Clark, in his testimony: "Alcohol is a poison. So is strychnine, so is arsenic, so is opium. It ranks with these agents. Health is always in some way or other injured by it; benefited by it — never."

Alcohol is not to be called a food, even though, taken in small amounts, it supplies energy to the body. "Strychnine in limited doses will supply energy, but strychnine is not a food. Alcohol cannot be classed with starch, sugar, and fat. Who ever heard of starch making a man brain his family? How many asylums are filled with victims of the sugar habit?" — *Rev. Joseph W. Cochran, D.D.*

Dr. Alexander Lambert says that of the 24,300 patients in Bellevue Hospital, New York, in 1900, one-fourth went through the alcoholic ward, among them being many who had taken the various "cures."

IV. **Broken Laws and Broken Hearts.** — V. 3–7. **3. And Moses said unto Aaron.** Not in reproof, but explaining the terrible judgment. **This is it that the Lord spake.** If in these words precisely, they are not recorded; but God had often uttered their substance (Ex. 19: 22). **Saying, I will be sanctified.** "I will have my holiness made manifest to the people." **In them that come nigh me.** A frequent designation of the priests, who, because of their very nearness to Jehovah, had the greater responsibility of showing him forth in virtuous lives. God was like a human father, who, just because his son is so near and dear to him, dares not permit any wrong-doing of his to go unpunished. The principle applies to-day to all men and nations that have the best opportunities of knowing God. (See Amos. 3: 2.) **And Aaron held his peace.** His wailing might have been interpreted by the people as upbraiding God. Besides, remembering how weak he was in the matter of the golden calf, perhaps he had brought up his sons weakly, and felt himself a sharer in their guilt. So the Psalmist: "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it" (Lev. 39: 9).

4. And Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan. These first cousins of Aaron were probably the nearest relations who were not priests, and it may have been on account of their defilement that the second passover was established (Num. 9: 6–11). Aaron's other sons could not be given the satisfaction of performing the last rites for their brothers, because the people would connect them with their brothers' sin. **Carry your brethren.** The term "brethren" is used often of near relatives. **Out of the camp,** where all burials took place.

5. So they . . . carried them in their coats. "The long white tunics, which were the most characteristic part of the priest's dress." — *Cook.*

6. Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's remaining sons. **Let not the hair of your heads**

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7. [1] And ye shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, tent of meeting, lest ye die: [2] for the anointing oil of the LORD is upon you. And they did according to the word of Mō'ses.

8. And the LORD spake unto Aar'on, saying,

9. [3] Do not drink Drink no wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest tent of meeting, that ye die: it shall be not: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations:

[1] Lev. 21: 12. [2] Ex. 28: 41; Lev. 8: 30. [3] Ezek. 44: 21; Luke 1: 15; 1 Tim. 3: 3.

go loose. "Both this and the rending of the clothes were among the most common signs of mourning among the Jews." — *Lange.* **Lest ye die.** Aaron and his sons were forbidden to mourn in public for any death (Lev. 21: 2, 3) except near kindred; but even this was forbidden them in this case, that the people might know that they acquiesced in God's just decree. **Lest wrath come upon all the people,** since no ruler can sin without involving his people in the sad results. **But let your brethren . . . bewail.** The mourning of the people would not be misinterpreted, and would deepen the impression of the event.

7. **And ye shall not go out,** to accompany the dead bodies. They were to keep right on with their priestly duties. **For the anointing oil of the Lord is upon you.** "By the anointing they had been set apart to represent God before Israel." — *Kellogg.* It was called "the oil of gladness" (Psa. 45: 7), and was not to be associated with mourning. Compare Matt. 8: 22.

ILLUSTRATION. The story of the young nobleman who held Alexander's censer while the emperor was sacrificing. A coal fell upon his flesh, but he let it burn rather than disturb the service.

FOURTH TEMPERANCE LESSON: INTEMPERANCE INVOLVES THE SORROW OF MANY INNOCENT ONES. If the evil effects of drunkenness were confined to the guilty, it would be woe indeed, but the most pitiful results of intemperance would be abolished. Wisely, however, God has so bound the world together that no man can sin, but that others, and usually many others, suffer with him.

Innocent Victims of the Saloon.

ILLUSTRATION. An anonymous writer describes a new map of the United States. "On that map is a canal — the canal of death — 50 miles long, 40 miles wide, and 10 feet deep. It is filled with liquor, a new supply every year. Down each bank is a line of corpses, and another line down the middle, — three continuous lines of corpses, each line 50 miles long, the yearly victims of the saloon. Along one line of latitude are 2,500,000 drunkards, stretched across the continent. Around the coasts of both oceans, the great lakes and gulf, Canada and Mexico, is a boundary line, — the widows and orphans, the weeping fathers and mothers, of these 2,500,000 drunkards, — the nation's girdle of sorrow."

"When once the demon enters,
Stands within the door,
Peace and hope and gladness
Dwell there nevermore."

"Touch the goblet no more!
It will make thy heart sore
To its very core!"
— *Longfellow's Christus.*

V. **Temperance Lessons written in Flame.** — Vs. 8–11. 9. **Do not drink wine nor strong drink.** The nearness of this injunction to the story of Nadab and Abihu implies that their sin was due, partly if not wholly, to intoxication. "The Palestinian Chaldee adds here, 'as thy sons did who died by the burning fire.'" — *Ginsburg.* **Thou nor thy sons.** No father wants his boy to be a drunkard; but the boys will follow the example of a drinking father rather than his precept. The saloon could not exist ten years without the boys. "Cultivate a taste for liquor by treating the boys," was the abominable advice given frankly by a saloon-keeper at a convention of that trade in Ohio. **When ye go into the tabernacle.** The immediate reason is, of course, that the liquor would confuse their brains, and keep them from performing their duties properly.

FIFTH TEMPERANCE LESSON: STRONG DRINK INJURES ALL LABOR. In no case is the use of strong drink as a beverage anything but a detriment to a worker, whether he work with hand or head. This injury is direct, if the worker himself uses liquor; and it is indirect but definite and very heavy, if the worker has to pay for the crime, disease, and pauperism that the saloon causes.

Strong Drink, Weak Workers.

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10. And that ye may [1] put difference between the holy and the unholy, and the common, and between the unclean and the clean;

11. [2] And that ye may teach the children of Is'ra-el all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken unto them by the hand of Mō'ses.

[1] Lev. 11: 47; Jer. 15: 19; Ezek. 22: 26. [2] Deut. 24: 8; Jer. 18: 18.

ILLUSTRATIONS. Figuring the annual liquor bill of the United States at $900,000,000, it would equal a pile of silver dollars 1,578 miles high. "It would take ten men with scoop shovels to throw away money as fast as we are wasting it for grog." — *Christian Observer.*

Robert J. Burdette has a humorous talk with his "friend with the chromatic nose" who longs for the independent life of a farmer. He shows him that for some years he has been drinking a good improved farm at the rate of 100 square feet at a gulp. "Now pour down the fiery dose, and imagine you are swallowing a strawberry patch."

"Forty-seven of the great trunk railroads now discriminate against employees that drink. A recent bulletin of the United States Labor Commission reports that of 7,025 establishments, agricultural, mining, and transportation, of which inquiries were made, 3,527 take into account a man's drinking habits when they employ him." — *Rev. William Parsons.*

In 1898 a committee of the Hennepin Avenue M. E. Church of Minneapolis addressed thirty of the city's leading business men in a great variety of callings, all of whom replied with emphasis that they discriminated against drinking men in choosing their employees.

The American Grocer, using government statistics and writing April 3, 1901, figures the total drink bill of this country at $1,228,674,925, of which alcoholic drinks cost $1,059,563,787, the slight remainder being spent for coffee, tea, cocoa, and the like. The greater part of this drink bill is paid by the laboring classes.

SIXTH TEMPERANCE LESSON: INTEMPERANCE IS UNDER GOD'S ETERNAL BAN.

The Perpetual Law of Temperance.

It shall be a statute for ever. It is a great satisfaction to get one's life based upon permanent principles, and temperance is one of the most necessary of these. The temptations to drunkenness are many times greater now than in Bible times, and the sin is far more prevalent in our nation than ever in Palestine. Never was there so great need of emphasizing this standing law.

"Drunkenness is a sin. The Bible condemns the drunkard. He is not to inherit eternal life. He is excluded from the Kingdom as having defiled that body which was made to be a temple for the divine indwelling, and desecrated that soul which was meant to be a reflex image of the God of holiness." — *Pres. John Henry Barrows.*

10. That ye may put difference between the holy and unholy. Drunkenness (see v. 1) dulls the moral nature. Intemperance and religion are eternal foes because the first is unclean and the second holy, the first is slavery to the body and the second mastery over it. The church should be the active opponent of the saloon, because the saloon is seeking to destroy everything which the church is seeking to promote.

SEVENTH TEMPERANCE LESSON: INTEMPERANCE DESTROYS INFLUENCE OVER OTHERS.

Intemperance and Influence.

11. And that ye may teach the children of Israel. The Levites were the official teachers of the nation; and as the blind cannot lead the blind, so neither can heads muddled with strong drink teach the truth to others. Aaron was passing through a terrible experience, but it was well worth while, since it enabled him to keep his nation from experiences still more terrible.

It is especially necessary that teachers, public officials, employers, all in positions of authority and influence, be total abstainers. But every Christian, also, is a light set on a hill. A Christian life is an electric advertisement of Christianity, and the least departure from strict temperance is like the breaking of some of the lamps, leaving gaps in the sign and spoiling it.

ILLUSTRATIONS. The introduction of the saloon into the Philippines is teaching the natives what hundreds of missionaries can scarcely counteract. "This," said President Schurman, chairman of the Philippine Commission, "has hurt the Americans more than anything else in the eyes of the natives." Among ex-President Harrison's last public utterances was an earnest plea for the suppression of the rum traffic with the feeble races of Africa and the Pacific islands.

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One of the finest examples of consistent temperance influence is shown in the life of Khama, the Christian chief of South Africa. He stopped native beer-making. He prohibited the introduction of strong drink by white men. When he found them transgressing this rule, he drove them from his country. He carried out his temperance program in the face of tremendous opposition, native and foreign.

LESSON VII. — August 17.

JOURNEYING TOWARD CANAAN.

Numbers 10: 11–13, 29–36.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *For thy name's sake lead me, and guide me.* — PSALMS 31: 3.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Win Attention by asking the class to tell the differences between a cornstalk and an oak sapling of the same height. Why is the latter so much stronger? Thus illustrate the slow growth of the Hebrews and their consequent endurance through history.

Draw, as you go on, a sketch map of the two wildernesses, Sinai and Paran. Get the class to draw it with you, on pencil tablets. Represent the three days' journey northward by a dotted line. Indicate the three nights' encampments. Write opposite these the three lessons in spiritual progress as they are developed in teaching: the cloud, the accession of Hobab, the journey songs. Draw two parallel bars across their route to symbolize the barriers to progress raised by the discontent, first of the people, and then of their leaders, Miriam and Aaron. Continue the dotted line as you show how these barriers were removed.

Close with an earnest application of the whole to the personal needs of your scholars.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

Subjects to be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

An account of the wilderness.
What the Israelites gained by the delay at Sinai.
What the Israelites gained from the hardships of the journey.
How God guides his people in our day.
Famous songs of the Bible.
How does Hobab illustrate the way some men come to Christ?
Num. 11 and its lessons.
Num. 12 and its lessons.

PICTURES.

The Cloudy Pillar standing at the Tabernacle Door, Raphael. *Journeying to Canaan*, Beale.

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 33, 34; Psa. 43: 3; Isa. 55: 4.

THE SECTION

includes a rapid survey of Numbers up to this point, the lesson, and chapters 11 and 12.

The Book of Numbers is the fourth book of the Pentateuch, and is named from the two numberings or censuses of the people it records, one near the beginning, and the other near the end of the forty years' stay in the desert. It contains the account of the forty years in the wilderness, with many important laws then formulated. See Introduction to the quarter.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: Lessons in Progress.

I. THE OBJECT-LESSON OF THE MOVING CLOUD (vs. 11–13).
   Why the long stay at Sinai?
   How God guided the Israelites.
   How God guides us.

II. THE EXAMPLE OF HOBAB (vs. 29–32).
   An invitation refused.
   An invitation accepted.
   Our invitations to Christ.

III. THE JOURNEY SONGS OF MOSES (vs. 33–36).
   The orderly march.
   Prayer for God's triumph.
   Prayer for God's presence.

IV. THE REBELLION AGAINST THE MANNA (Num. 11).
   A sin of the people.
   The graves of greed.

V. THE REBELLION OF AARON AND MIRIAM (Num. 12).
   The sin of the leaders.
   The leprosy of pride.

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HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. At the beginning of the second stage of the journey to Canaan, the start from Sinai on the twentieth day of the second month of the second year after leaving Egypt, probably about the middle of May, B. C. 1490.

Place. Starting from the plain of Er-Râhah at the base of Mt. Sinai between the two arms of the Red Sea, the course lay northward into the wilderness of Paran, the great barren region between Sinai and Canaan. Palmer identifies Kibroth-Hattaavah with positiveness, finding there an immense number of ancient graves.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

Books on Numbers named in the Introduction. Watson in the *Expositor's Bible* is especially helpful. On the desert of Paran see Trumbull's *Kadesh-Barnea* (Scribners). Palmer's *The Desert of the Exodus* (Harpers). Robertson's chapter on Numbers in *Book by Book* (Isbister). Edersheim's *The Exodus and the Wanderings in the Wilderness* (Bradley & Woodruff). Chapter on Numbers in Bush's *Introduction to the Pentateuch* (Religious Tract Soc.). Chapters on the lesson in Taylor's *Moses the Law-Giver*, Meyer's *Moses the Servant of God*, and Mrs. Whitney's *The Open Mystery*.

PRONUNCIATIONS.

Hō'bab, Răgū'ĕl, Reū'ĕl or Rĕū'ĕl, Kĭb'rŏth-Hătā'ăvăh, Tîh (Tee).

11. And it came to pass on the twentieth *day* of the second month, in the second year, in the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth day of the month, that the cloud [1] was taken up from off over the tabernacle of the testimony.

[1] Num. 9: 17.

The lessons thus far taught the Israelites in the wilderness training school might be called stationary lessons, — trust, duty, obedience, worship, and temperance. They were now ready to move forward from Sinai upon their toilsome journey, and the appropriate lesson was *progress*. It was taught in five ways.

I. **The Object-lesson of the Moving Cloud.** — Vs. 11–13. **11. In the second year.** The Israelites had reached Sinai in the third month after their escape from Egypt (Ex. 19: 1), and they left it **in the second month, on the twentieth day** of the month. Therefore they had spent nearly a year around Sinai.

The Delays of Providence.

WHY THIS LONG DELAY? (1) To educate the people in liberty. They had left Egypt a nation of slaves. They were now well organised politically in divisions of tens, fifties, hundreds, and thousands (Ex. 18: 25; Deut. 1: 15), with a general council of seventy elders (Ex. 24: 1; Num. 11: 24–26) which the rabbis believe was the origin of the Sanhedrim. (2) To establish the people in their religion. They had left Egypt tainted with idolatry. Now God had given them laws, ritual, priesthood, tabernacle, all pure and elevating. (3) To strengthen the nation physically. They needed rest from their life of bondage, and the wholesome bodily training of the wilderness. They left Sinai a mighty host, numbering, according to the census in Num. 1 and 2, no less than 603,550 men, twenty years old or more, besides 22,000 Levites. The women and children would make the total about two million. Some commentators greatly reduce this estimate, considering the "thousands" to be only round statements, just as our regiments sometimes contain only a third or a half of their nominal thousand men; but according to any view they numbered at least a million in all.

PREPARATION AND PROGRESS. The value of thorough preparation for a task is illustrated by innumerable successful lives. Bessemer's process of steel-making was the result of years of patient experiment. Noah Webster spent thirty-six years on his dictionary. Thalberg, the pianist, said he never ventured on a public performance of a piece till he had played it at least fifteen hundred times in private. Edison worked on his phonograph from eighteen to twenty hours a day for seven months to get it to pronounce the letter "s." For other illustrations see Marden's *Architects of Fate*, chap. 9 ($1.50, Houghton, Mifflin & Co.), and his *Success* ($1.25, W. A. Wilde Company).

The cloud, the shining cloud which was God's visible presence brooding over the sanctuary, **was taken up from off the tabernacle of the testimony.** This name was given the tabernacle, because of the principal object it contained, the ark of the testi-

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12. And the children of Is'ra-el took set forward according to [1] their journeys out of the [2] wilderness of Sī'nāi; and the cloud rested abode in the [3] wilderness of Pā'ran.

13. And they first took their journey [4] according to the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Mō'ses.

[1] Ex. 40: 36; Num. 2: 9, 16.
[2] Ex. 19: 1; Num. 1: 1; 9: 5.
[3] Gen. 21: 21; Num. 12: 16; Deut. 1: 1.
[4] Vs. 5, 6; Num. 2: 34.

mony. The rising of the cloud was the understood signal for their departure, and at once the silver trumpets (Num. 10: 1–10) would announce the move.

12. **And the children of Israel took** (set forward according to) **their journeys.** By short stages, rendered necessary by their numbers. **Out of the wilderness of Sinai.** The mountainous region between the upper arms of the Red Sea. **And the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran.** This was reached only after a three days' journey (Num. 12: 16), which is here considered, in a general way, as a single march. Paran is the modern desert of Tîh, still pointed out by Arabic traditions as the scene of the wanderings. It measures about 150 miles in either direction, extending from the Sinai region to Canaan. Winterbotham describes it thus: "This wilderness of Paran is indeed 'a great and terrible wilderness' (Deut. 1: 19), lacking for the most part the precipitous grandeur of the granite mountains of Sinai, but lacking also their fertile valleys and numerous streams. A bare limestone or sandstone plateau, crossed by low ranges of hills, seamed with innumerable dry water-courses, and interspersed with large patches of sand and gravel, is what now meets the eye of the traveler in this forsaken land. . . . Perhaps so bad a country has never been attempted by any army in modern days, even by the Russian troops in Central Asia."

13. **And they first took their journey.** The significance of "first" is doubtful. "Perhaps it means, 'They journeyed in the order of precedence' assigned to them by their marching orders in chap. 2." — *Pulpit Commentary*. **According to the commandment of the Lord by the hand of Moses.** The manner of march was disclosed to Moses, either by the direct Word of God or by divine illumination of his mind, and he announced it to the leaders of the tribes.

THE CLOUDY PILLAR. In this mysterious sign God followed the analogy of a common custom of the East, made necessary by the absence of roads. A grate full of burning and smoking fuel, lifted high on a pole, was carried before caravans and armies to indicate the way. Such a host as the Israelites could not march in a compact body. The very necessity of feeding their flocks would scatter them wherever herbage might be found; and the divine signal, towering high in the air, was a necessary guide and rendezvous. In Num. 9: 15–23 it is told how implicitly the people obeyed it, setting forth when it rose from the tabernacle, though it was by night, and camping when it rested, though it was for a month or a year.

God Our Guide.

THE PILLAR AND PROGRESS. 1. As God in this mysterious symbol went ahead of his people, so he is still ready to guide all that trust him, both men and nations.

"Not of the sunlight,
Not of the moonlight,
Not of the starlight!
O young Mariner,
Down to the haven,
Call your companions,
Launch your vessel
And crowd your canvas,
And, ere it vanishes
Over the margin,
After it, follow it,
Follow the Gleam."
— *Tennyson.*

2. There can be no progress except with this guidance. Only once (Num. 14: 44, 45) did the Israelites venture where the ark did not lead the way, and they were sadly overthrown.

3. This guidance is no longer by a visible sign, like the cloudy pillar, because we have passed beyond the childhood of the race, we have the Bible, we have the experience of past ages, we have the clear revelation of Christianity. This way of getting directions from God is vastly higher than the way vouchsafed to the Israelites. It requires more manliness, and it develops a loftier character.

4. "And the children of Israel set forward" (v. 12). God's guidance is conditioned on our obedience. Cease to rise when the alarm clock sounds, and soon you will sleep through all its din. Every morning, when God's cloud of darkness rises from the world, it

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29. And Mō'ses said unto Hō'băb, the son of [1] Ra-gu'el (Reu'el) the Mĭd'ĭ-an-ite, Mō'ses' father in law, We are journeying unto the place of which the LORD said, [2] I will give it you: come thou with us, and [3] we will do thee good: for [4] the LORD hath spoken good concerning Is'ra-el.

[1] Ex. 2: 18.
[2] Gen. 12: 7.
[3] Judg. 1: 16.
[4] Gen. 32: 12; Ex. 3: 8; 6: 7.

moves off in the direction of some duty. If you follow promptly, it will be in sight all day long, and will return in blessing at night.

5. The cloud led from one wilderness to a worse one. So it is often with those that follow God's guidance. He does not promise an easy journey, but he does promise the heavenly Canaan at the end of it.

6. As the cloud always rested upon the tabernacle or rose from it, so God's guidance and all our progress must be connected with his revealed religion.

7. As the Israelites did not know why the cloud tarried now for a long while in one place and now hurried on, so to us the movements of God's guiding providence are often mysterious; yet we obey, because we trust God's wisdom.

8. God's guidance provides resting places as well as marches. The Christian's progress is not like the desperate scrambles for money, pleasure, or preferment which make up the lives of worldlings. Christians often pitch their tents and rest quietly before the Lord, as on the Sabbath, at family prayers, and in hours of meditation and Bible-reading.

THE OMITTED PASSAGE, vs. 14–28, describes the orderly process of breaking up camp, the different portions of the tabernacle being assigned to the various families of Levites to carry. The disposition of the tribes in their marches is also set down, Judah occupying the van and Dan the rear, while the ark was borne in the center, protected on all sides by the other tribes.

ILLUSTRATIONS. Orderliness is essential for any work. Whitefield could not sleep at night until he knew that his riding outfit was in its place, ready for any emergency. Napoleon, a man of minute and wonderful knowledge, used to say that his information was all deposited in drawers, where he could put his hand on it at once. Cecil compared method to the work of a good packer, who can get in twice as much as a poor one. In religious, as well as secular, work, orderly progress is double progress.

LIBRARY. Chapter 12 of Matthew's *Getting on in the World.*

II. **The Example of Hobab.** — Vs. 29–32. **29. And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel.** This is the same as the Reuel of Ex. 2: 18, who is generally supposed to be the same as Jethro (Ex. 3: 1), Reuel being his name, and Jethro, which means *Excellency*, his honorary title. **The Midianite.** Hobab belonged to the Kenites, an Arab tribe of Midian, east of Sinai. They were sometimes called Amalekites. **Moses' father in law.** The Hebrew word here translated "father in law" means any relation by marriage, so that Hobab may have been Moses' brother-in-law, being brother to Zipporah, Moses' wife. It will be remembered that already a lasting friendship had been formed between the Kenites and Israelites, sealed by sacrifice (Ex. 18: 12). **We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you.** Moses had in mind God's promises made to Abraham (Gen. 12: 7; 13: 15; 17: 8), Isaac (Gen. 26: 3), Jacob (Gen. 28: 13), and the Israelites of his own day (Ex. 3: 8).

TWO REASONS why Hobab should go were urged by Moses. *First reason:* **Come thou with us, and we will do thee good.** Hobab would have the manna, the guiding pillar, the tabernacle, the ever-present manifestation of God, the Promised Land, and, especially, the splendid future before the nation, — **For the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel.**

Inviting Men to Christ.

THE GREAT INVITATION. 1. Every Christian should be able to give just such an invitation as this. He knows whither he is going, and what joys are sure at the end of the journey. He knows how foolish is all pursuit of mammon. He should be bold in calling worldlings from their way to his.

2. He should give the invitation by word of mouth, when occasion offers, and he should be giving it all the time by his life. A happy-faced Christian is a standing advertisement of Christianity.

3. It is an invitation to Christ and not to us. If we say, "We, the church, will do thee good," it is only because the church is "the body of Christ."

4. The only progress of the *world* lies along the line of this invitation, drawing the Hobabs from their Midians to Canaan.

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30. And he said unto him, I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred.

31. And he said, Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest [shalt] be to us [1] instead of eyes.

[1] Job 29: 15.

5. The only progress of the *church* springs from such invitation-giving. As Dr. A. J. Gordon once said, "A church that is not a *mis*sionary church will be a *mis*sing one."

ILLUSTRATIONS. It does not need a Moses to give the invitation. An obscure village in India once sent for a missionary to baptize and receive into the church seventy native converts. Among them was a lad of about fifteen, and when his turn came the missionary urged him to test his faith, since he was so young, by waiting for baptism till the missionary's next visit. At once all the people sprung to the feet, crying, "It is he that taught us all we know about Christ." And so it turned out to be.

Do not wait for others to give the invitation. A man was once praying for an unconverted neighbor. "O Lord," he prayed, "touch him with thy finger!" As he uttered these words something said to him, "*Thou* art the finger of God!" He had known the man for twenty-five years and had never spoken to him of Christ.

Do not wait for the unconverted to approach you. A beach-master who has saved many bathers from drowning says that not one of them all *cried out* as he went down, or made a sign except the involuntary raising of one hand.

LIBRARY. Torrey's *How to bring Men to Christ*, and *How to conduct and promote a Revival* (Revell).

30. And he said unto him, I will not go. "The true Arab loves his country passionately. The desert is his home, the mountains are his friends. His hard life is a life of liberty. He is strongly attached to his tribe, which has its own traditions, its own glories. The people of the clan are brothers and sisters." — *R. A. Watson, D.D.* Besides, since Hobab was prospective head of his tribe, he may have been unwilling to subordinate his authority to that of Moses. Yet the desert life had no promise for the future, no progress; while the Israelites had assured hopes of a great nation, based on the covenant of God with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

MODERN HOBABS. The reason why many will not "follow on to know the Lord" is because they prefer a rambling, irresponsible, self-willed life to the healthful restraints of religion. Like the citizens in Christ's parable, they "will not have this man to reign over" them (Luke 19: 14). "Yet the liberty of their Midian," says Watson, "is illusory. It is simply freedom to spend strength in vain, to roam from place to place where all alike are barren, to climb mountains lightning-riven, swept by interminable storms."

Another reason why many refuse the Christian life is because it would cause them to break with old associations and familiar scenes. "Mine own land, and my kindred," was Hobab's excuse. But Christ commands us to "hate" fathers, mothers, possessions, if they would draw us away from him.

A third reason for the rejection of the Christian invitation is ignorance of its infinite value. An urchin will throw away a ticket to a symphony concert, but work a week for admission to a circus. If a tramp should find a priceless Titian in a rubbish heap, he would sell it for a glass of beer.

31. And he said, Leave us not, I pray thee. Moses' persistence is an example of that perseverance which is the basis of all progress and accomplishment. If it is worth while to pursue a dollar in spite of many failures, surely it is worth while to scorn failures in pursuit of a soul. Often when a man seems most opposed to religion he is on the very point of surrender to God.

Second reason urged upon Hobab: **Thou mayest be to us instead of eyes.** Finding that an exhibit of what the Kenite might gain had no persuasive effect, Moses wisely sets before him a chance of giving. Hobab knew the desert, its resources, its hostile or friendly tribes, and he would be an invaluable guide supplementing the general guidance of the fiery pillar. Moreover, his presence would ally to the Israelites the powerful influence of the strong tribe to which he belonged.

A WORD FOR SOUL-WINNERS. Two pleas must be used in inviting souls to Christ: "You need Christ; Christ needs you." Even if it is a child whom you are inviting, show

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32. And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that [1] what (goodness good soever) the LORD shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee.

33. And they (departed set forward) from [2] the mount of the LORD three days' journey; and the ark of the covenant of the LORD [3] went before them (in the) three days' journey, to (search seek) out a resting place for them.

34. And [4] the cloud of the LORD (was upon was over) them by day, when they (went out of set forward from) the camp.

35. And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Mō'ses said, [5] Rise up, O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee.

36. And when it rested, he said, Return, O LORD, unto the (many ten thousands) of the thousands of Is'ra-el.

[1] Judg. 1: 16. [2] Ex. 3: 1. [3] Deut. 1: 33; Psa. 132: 8. [4] Ex. 13: 21. [5] Psa. 68: 1, 2; 132: 8.

him how he can be useful in the church. People go where they want to go, but they are doubly likely to go where they are wanted.

A third reason was joined with the second: **32. What goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee.** Hobab had not shared the Egyptian bondage, but he might share Canaan. Thus early is hinted the truth that Christ teaches fully in the vineyard parable: the eleventh-hour laborer receives the full day's wages.

It is not expressly stated that this second urging succeeded, but later references to the Kenites as forming a part of the Hebrew nation make it probable that Hobab, with at least a portion of his tribe, entered Canaan with Joshua. (See Judg. 1: 16; 4: 11; 1 Sam. 15: 6; 2 Kings 10: 15 compared with 1 Chron. 2: 55.)

KENITES AND ISRAELITES. Little is known about Hobab's religion, but it is certain that the Kenite faith was much inferior to the Israelite. Should the church, it is often asked, receive aid from those that do not belong to the church? And the answer seems given us in this incident. The Israelites went on their way, and Moses still led the host, and the tabernacle services were still maintained, precisely as if no outsiders had been received into the camp. So the church may accept the tributes of wealth (honestly earned), of science, of art, of music, provided these non-Christian benefactors are not allowed to mold Christian opinion or turn aside a hair's breadth the legitimate labors of the church.

III. **The Journey Songs of Moses.** — Vs. 33–36. **33. Three days' journey.** So great a multitude, with all their goods, would be unable to march more than ten miles a day, less than thirty miles in the three days. **The ark . . . went before them.** The position of the ark was ordinarily in the center of the host. Perhaps there was some special reason why at the outset this plan was not followed.

PRACTICAL. All true progress depends on keeping religion in the front. Send it ahead on all your journeys; let it form your plans, choose your situations, select your friends and co-workers.

34. And the cloud of the Lord was upon them by day. Perhaps, rising from the ark, it spread out over the host, at least the nearer companies, as a grateful protection from the sun, — a protection remembered long afterward, and commemorated in such phrases as "the shadow of the Almighty" (Psa. 91: 1) and "the shadow of a cloud" (Isa. 25: 4, 5).

A Prayer for God's Triumph. **35. When the ark set forward . . . Moses said, Rise up, O Lord.** These words were afterwards made the opening words and the theme of one of the noblest of the psalms, the sixty-eighth, which is full of splendid references to Israel's march. **And let thine enemies be scattered.** They had need to pray this. "Swiftly, silently, as if springing out of the very sand, the Arab raiders might bear down upon the travelers." — *Watson.*

A Prayer for God's Presence. **36. And when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord.** "Only Moses, as he looked upon that huge multitude covering the earth far and wide, could rightly feel how unutterably awful their position would be if on any day the cloud *were* to rise and melt into the evening sky instead of poising itself above the sanctuary of Israel." — *Pulpit Commentary.*

PRAYER AND PROGRESS. 1. Every day is a little journey. It is most certain to be a day's journey toward Canaan if in the morning and evening we can truly pray these prayers

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of Moses, asking in the morning for God's guidance and in the evening for God's presence and approval.

2. If Moses had prayed as many men pray, he would have said, "Rise up, O Lord, and make our journey pleasant." We shall make progress in the Christian life when we identify ourselves with God's interests, forget the heat and hunger and weariness of our wilderness way, and pray for the triumph of God's kingdom over all his foes.

3. Moses' evening prayer discloses another secret of Christian progress, — the presence of God. God was only one and the Israelites were "ten thousands of thousands," yet Moses was lonely without God and longed to have him close at hand.

ILLUSTRATION. St. Patrick's prayer when he entered on the conversion of Ireland was:—

"May the strength of God pilot me,
May the power of God preserve me,
May the wisdom of God instruct me,
May the eye of God view me,
May the ear of God hear me;
Christ be with me,
Christ in the hearts of all to whom I speak."

Following the general theme of this lesson, the events of the next two chapters disclose some of the serious hindrances to the progress of the Israelites, and illustrate the hindrances to our own Christian progress.

IV. **The Rebellion against the Manna.** — Num. 11. Scarcely had the fickle people left Sinai, when their determination faltered before the hardships of the way. The cause of *the first complaint* is not given (vs. 1-3); the march had many perils and privations that might have caused it. But the terrible punishment is named, a "fire from the Lord" that ran through the camp consuming the rebellious people, and was stayed only by the prayer of Moses. The scene of this event was named Taberah ("Burning").

The second complaint arose from the manna. It tasted like fresh oil, or like wafers mixed with honey. They were cloyed with it, and longed for the flesh and vegetables of Egypt. They fell to childish weeping throughout the camp, and Moses was in despair. Thereupon God promised to grant the people's desires, and send them a surfeit of flesh whose very abundance would convince them of their folly. Blown by a providential wind from the south and east, the Elanitic Gulf, an immense flock of quails flew upon the camp. "These quails cannot sustain themselves long on the wing, and after crossing the desert some thirty or forty miles they would scarcely be able to fly. Fowls of this kind migrate at certain seasons in such enormous numbers that in the small island of Capri, near Naples, 160,000 have been netted in one season. When exhausted, they would easily be taken as they flew at a height of about two cubits above the ground." — *Watson*. The people caught them in great quantities, prepared them, and spread them on the ground to dry in the sun. They ate of them so greedily that a pestilence broke out and raged through the camp. Many of the foolish people died and were buried there, so that they called the place Kibroth-Hattaavah ("Graves of Greediness").

The Graves of Greed.

V. **The Rebellion of Aaron and Miriam.** — Num. 12. Scarcely had the rebellion against the manna been punished, before another revolt was set on foot. Aaron and Miriam had become jealous of their great brother. The pretext of their complaints was a Cushite woman, an Ethiopian, whom Moses had married (Zipporah, his first wife, may have died), and they began loudly to ask, "Has not God given us the gift of prophecy as well as Moses?" There was little foundation for this claim. At the crossing of the Red Sea (Ex. 15: 20, 21) Miriam had led the women in a song of triumph; Aaron had served as Moses' mouthpiece before Pharaoh, and had been made high priest; both, however, were far inferior to their brother in all the qualities of leadership. Therefore Jehovah pronounced in very plain terms upon Moses' supreme authority, speaking out of the mysterious cloud. Miriam, who seems to have been the leader in this revolt, was punished by an instant leprosy which left her white as snow, and it was only after Moses' earnest and magnanimous prayer, and a shameful exile from the camp for seven days, that she was restored again.

The Leprosy of Pride.

LESSONS FROM THE TWO REBELLIONS. 1. There is no progress except through the endurance of hardness. This is the lesson of the rebellion against the manna. Worlds are made by fire and flood. Metals are purified by furnaces. Gold is found in the mountains.

LIBRARY. *The Strenuous Life*, by Theodore Roosevelt (Scribners). The account of Dickens' early struggles, in vol. I. of Forster's biography. Kipling's poem, "Sergeant

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Whatisname." Many illustrations under "Hardships" in Peloubet's *Suggestive Illustrations* on Acts.

2. There is no progress except by humility. This is the lesson of Miriam's rebellion. Great souls are the most teachable, the least conceited. When General Gordon once received an appointment to an important post, he took his horse and rode to a lonely place for long prayer against the danger of pride.

LIBRARY. Andrew Murray's masterpiece, *Humility*.

3. There is no progress except by getting rid of sin. Miriam's leprosy was a token of God's hatred of sin. "We make so much of bodily maladies, so little of diseases of the soul, that we would think it strange if any one for his pride should be struck with paralysis, or for envy should be laid down with fever. Yet beside the spiritual disorder that of the body is of small moment. The bad heart is the great disease." — *Watson*. Miriam's separation from the camp and their enforced delay taught this lesson to all the people.

LESSON VIII. — August 24.

REPORT OF THE SPIES. — Numbers 13 : 26–14 : 4.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust.*** PSA. 40: 4.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Arouse Interest by asking the class what countries they would like to explore, and getting them to name some famous explorers. We are to study to-day one of the most important exploring expeditions of all history.

Draw a Sketch Map of the country from Kadesh Barnea to Lebanon, marking these, Hebron, the Eshcol, and the location of the tribes named. Get the class to make similar maps on pencil tablets, following you step by step.

Condense the reports of the spies into a few words, which all will write on their maps; for the discouragements: "giants," "walls," "devouring," "unable," etc.; for the encouragements: "milk," "honey," "grapes," "figs," "pomegranates," "promises," "GOD." Draw circles around the encouragements, indicating that few could see them.

Close with an earnest application of the story to the Christian's Canaan.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

Subjects to be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

Was the expedition of the spies wise or unwise?
How the spies came to give such different reports.
Reasons why the Israelites should have trusted God.
Why did God keep the Israelites forty years in the desert?
Compare the Christian life to the Promised Land.
Compare the two classes of spies to modern men and women.

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 30–33; Heb. 3: 19; Psa. 37: 5.

THE SECTION.

Num. 13, 14; the parallel in Deut. 1, and the spiritual interpretation in Heb. 3: 7–19; 4: 1–3.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: A Lesson in Courage.

I. SPYING OUT THE LAND. A TEST OF COURAGE (Num. 13: 1–25).
- Why the expedition was made.
- How it was made.
- Our promised lands.

II. A REPORT OF FACTS (vs. 26–29).
- Grapes of Eshcol.
- Children of Anak.
- Lessons for the timid.

III. A COURAGEOUS REPORT (v. 30).
- Caleb's confidence.
- How courage conquers.

IV. A COWARDLY REPORT (vs. 31–33).
- Giants *versus* grasshoppers.
- The causes of cowardice.

V. A COWARDLY PEOPLE (vs. 1–4).
- The weeping.
- The murmuring.
- The open revolt.

VI. THE PENALTY OF COWARDICE (Num. 14: 5–45).
- Forty years to wait.
- A too-late repentance.

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HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. The time is fixed by Num. 13: 20 as "the time of the first ripe grapes," which in Palestine may be as early as July. B. C. 1490 (common chronology).

Place. Eleven days' journey from Sinai (Deut. 1: 2), in the desert of Zin, the northern part of the desert of Paran, is a lovely oasis "of a New England aspect," surrounded by hills which form the southern rampart of Palestine. It is several miles wide, large enough for Israel's camping ground. A pure stream flows from a cliff, and fills two wells and a large pool. The Arabs call it Ain Qadees, "the holy well," and Dr. Trumbull has identified it as Kadesh ("the holy") Barnea ("the desert of wandering"). This beautiful place became the Israelites' pivotal point through their remaining thirty-eight years in the desert.

PRONUNCIATIONS.

Am'ălĕkites, Am'ŏrites, A'năk, Că'năan (Kā'năn), Esh'cŏl (Es'kŏl), Hĭt'tites, Jĕb'ūsites, Jĕphŭn'nĕh, Kā'dĕsh Băr'nĕă, Pā'răn, Qā'dēēs or Qā'dĭs, Zĭn, Ahĭ'măn, Shē'shăi (Shē'shā), Tăl'măi (Tăl'mā).

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

Commentaries on Numbers, and lives of Moses. Trumbull's *Kadesh Barnea* (Scribners) is the classic on this lesson. Palmer's *Desert of the Exodus* (Harpers). Robinson's *The Land and the Book* has many valuable descriptions. Edersheim's *Wanderings in the Desert;* Tristram's *Land of Israel* on Eshcol; the hymns, "Beulah Land," and "Jerusalem, the Golden"; "Modern Kadesh," article by Prof. George L. Robinson, Ph.D., in *The Biblical World*, May, 1901.

PICTURES.

Report of the Spies, Beale.

The Israelites had now spent about fifteen months in God's wilderness training school. In wise and wonderful ways Jehovah had been teaching them great lessons of trust, duty, worship, obedience, temperance, progress. Now comes an examination to test their minds and hearts, — an examination in which, alas! most of them failed.

I. **Spying out the Land. A Test of Courage.** — Num. 13: 1–25. Having reached Kadesh Barnea, the threshold of Canaan, the Israelites urged (Deut. 1: 22) that explorers be sent on ahead; and God sanctioned the plan (Num. 13: 1), because, though he wants men to rely on his guidance, he wants them also to use their own eyes. A headman, presumably brave and wise, was chosen for this purpose from each tribe save the Levites, who were not to share the partition of the land. The tribe of Joseph furnished two, one each for Ephraim and Manasseh.

Some scholars see evidences that the twelve spies divided into bands, one going about three hundred miles, through Palestine to the Lebanon Mountains; the other only about one hundred miles, to Hebron and the Eshcol valley a little beyond. Caleb, in that case, belonging to the first party, returned first, and is mentioned alone in Num. 13: 30; 14: 24 as making a brave report; while Joshua, taking the longer journey, afterwards joined Caleb in his courageous stand (Num. 14: 6, 7).

The Twelve Spies.



From a Photograph by Wilson.

Kadesh Barnea.
(As located by Robinson.)

Just such a "spying" of Canaan, for an Egyptian military expedition of the time of Thotmes III., long before Moses, is described on the walls of the temple of Karnak, in upper Egypt. The spies might have passed as Egyptian travelers. The monuments of Egypt and Assyria show that this was a most fortunate time to in-

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26. And they went and came to Mō'ses, and to Aar'on, and to all the congregation of the children of Is'ra-el, [1] unto the wilderness of Pā'ran, to [2] Kā'desh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land.

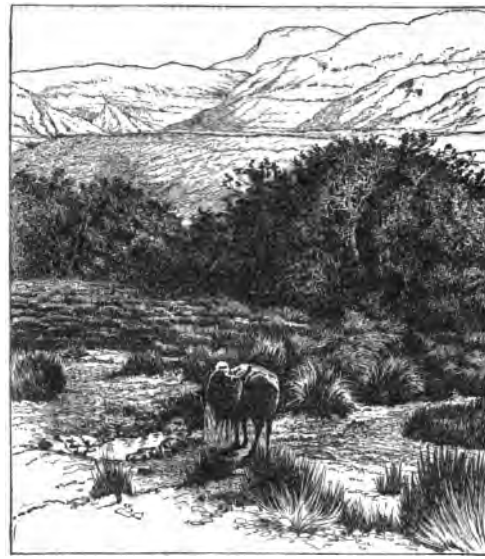
[1] V. 3. [2] Num. 20: 1, 16; Deut. 1: 19.

vade Palestine, because "Palestine had ceased to become an Egyptian province, and neither Babylonians nor Assyrians were strong enough to mingle in its politics." — *Sayce.*

WHY WAS THE EXPEDITION MADE? 1. To confirm the faith of the Israelites. Their long stay in the desert may have made the Promised Land seem almost a dream, while they remembered with longing the fertility of Egypt.

2. To test the courage of the people, and learn whether, on hearing that they must fight in order to win Canaan, they would continue to trust God.

3. To disclose to the people and their leaders their actual spiritual condition, thus proving the necessity of the long delay in the wilderness, and showing Moses and those like him what work remained for them to do in training the people.



From a Photograph by Wilson.

Kadesh Barnea.
(As located by Trumbull.)

SPYING OUT OUR PROMISED LAND. Our life is like a wilderness journey, full of hardships. God understands that we need the inspiration of hope, and so he has set before us a Promised Land. Part of it is in this life, — the satisfaction of duty done, the power it gives, the friendships that spring from it, the approval of noble men. The best part of it is in the next life, and the Bible is full of foregleams of heaven. Many spies have brought us good words from our Promised Land. They are the prophets, saints, and Christian heroes of all time, and Christ himself. One reason why Bible study is so profitable is the help it gives us in such comforting views of the future.

APPLICATIONS. "The spies were to climb the hills which commanded a view of the Promised Land. And there are heights which must be scaled if we are to have previsions of the heavenly life. We shall see the coming kingdom of God only if we follow in the footsteps of Christ to the summits of Sacrifice." — *Watson.*

Every father has to spy out the land for his child, every teacher for his pupils, every pastor for his flock. There is no one so humble but he or she is trusted to explore for some one else the fields of thought and action, and bring back true report.

II. **A Report of Facts.** — Vs. 26–29. The spies were gone forty days (v. 25). We may imagine the first company, returning from lower Palestine, making their report in the presence of an eager assembly.

26. And they. Either the twelve spies, or, as is at least probable, only a part of them, with Caleb but not with Joshua. **Came to Moses and to Aaron,** who, as leaders of the nation, had sent them forth. **And to all the congregation.** Doubtless the heads of thousands and hundreds, and as many representatives of the people as could assemble in one place. **To Kadesh.** See "Place." **And shewed them the fruit of the land.** They had gone as far as the valley of Eshcol, which means *a cluster, a bunch.* This rich valley is just north of Hebron, and is described by Robinson as producing the largest and best grapes in all Palestine, besides pomegranates, figs, apricots, quinces, and other fruit in

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27. And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with [1] milk and honey; [2] and this [is] the fruit of it.

28. [Nevertheless / Howbeit] [3] the people [be] strong that dwell in the land [are] strong, and the cities [are] walled, [and] very great: and moreover we saw [4] the children of A'năk there.

29. [5] The Am'a-lek-ites dwell / Am'a-lek dwelleth in the land of the [south: / South:] and the Hit'tites, / Hit'tite, and the Jeb'u-sites, / Jeb'u-site, and the Am'or-ites, / Am'or-ite, dwell in the mountains: and the Ca'naan-ites dwell / Ca'naan-ite dwelleth by the sea, and [along] by the [coast / side] of Jor'dan.

[1] Ex. 3: 8.
[2] Deut. 1: 25.
[3] Deut. 1: 28.
[4] V. 33.
[5] Ex. 17: 8; Num. 14: 43; Judg. 6: 3.



Pomegranate.

Blossom and Fruit.

abundance. The spies selected specimens of figs, pomegranates, and grapes, the latter being a magnificent cluster in honor of which the spies named the brook Eshcol. Two men carried it, hung between them on a pole, to prevent crushing. Kitto (*Phys. Hist. of Palestine*, p. 330) describes a nineteen-pound bunch of grapes produced at Welbeck from a Syrian vine in 1819, and borne as a present to the Marquis of Rockingham by four laborers, who carried it by twos, taking turns, a distance of twenty miles. The *Massachusetts Ploughman* records a bunch, grown in 1845 by Dr. Mitchell of Philadelphia, which measured two feet, four and five-eighths inches long and three feet across the shoulder, while the Boston *Cultivator* of 1881 tells of a bunch of black grapes weighing twenty-three pounds, five ounces.

GRAPES OF ESHCOL. 1. *Christians.* "By their fruits ye shall know them." A single Christian life is as convincing a proof of the truth of Christianity as a journey through the whole land of "Christian evidences."

2. *Christ.* "None of us has entered heaven; but Jesus, who has gone on in advance to take possession of it in his people's name, has sent back an Eshcol cluster of its vintage." — *Taylor.* Every life lived close to him is full of foretastes of heaven.

3. *Branches and vine.* No life can bear the "fruits of the Spirit" (Gal. 5: 22, 23), those grapes of Eshcol, except as it is united to the true Vine (John 15: 1–8) by faith and obedience.

27. It floweth with milk and honey. They were adopting God's own words to Moses, out of the burning bush (Ex. 3: 8). **And this is the fruit of it.** They wanted to appear judicial, looking a little on the good side and much on the bad side.

PRACTICAL. Nothing is so dangerous as a half-truth. "To damn with faint praise" has become a proverb. The worst enemies of Christianity are those who condescendingly praise its civilization, and then class Christ with Socrates. They accept Christ's fruits, but reject him.

Grapes — and Giants.

28. Nevertheless . . . the cities are walled and very great. "Not many cities could have been so large and so strongly fortified as was represented, though Lachish, Hebron, Shalim, and a few others were formidable." — *Watson.* Such cities seemed "an almost insuperable obstacle to a people wholly ignorant of artillery or of siege operations." — *Winterbotham.* **We saw the children of Anak there.** "A class of bandits whose names inspired terror throughout the district — Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, sons of Anak. The great stature of these men, exaggerated by common report, together with stories of their ferocity, seem to have impressed the timid Hebrews beyond measure." — *Watson.*

29. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the South. "The southern part of Pales-

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30. And [1] Cā'leb stilled the people before Mō'ses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.

31. [2] But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they $\frac{are}{are}$ stronger than we.

[1] Num. 14: 6, 24; Josh. 14: 7. [2] Num. 32: 9; Deut. 1: 28.

tine was known by the name of the Negeb, or south country. It formed the transition from the desert to the more highly cultivated country." — *Elliott.* "The Amalekites were the Bedouin of the time, probably with a look of poverty and hardship that gave little promise for any who should attempt to settle where they roamed." — *Watson.* The Israelites had already met the Amalekites, at Rephidim (Ex. 17: 8–16), and God had shown that he could conquer them. **And the Hittites.** A powerful, far-reaching people, whose remains have lately been discovered. They are represented on the Egyptian monuments (Sayce) as "an ugly race, with yellow skins, black hair and eyes, receding foreheads, and protrusive upper jaws." **And the Jebusites.** Possibly, as Driver suggests, a sub-tribe of the Canaanites. Jerusalem was their center, and they held it until the time of David. **And the Amorites.** Mountaineers, depicted on the Egyptian monuments (Sayce) as a tall race, with fair skins, light (also black) hair, and blue eyes. **And the Canaanites.** These occupied the lowlands, along the Mediterranean and the Jordan. "The name of Canaan is derived from a root signifying 'to bow down,' and means 'the lowlands' of Palestine." — *Sayce* in *Hastings' Bible Dictionary.*

LESSONS FOR THE TIMID. This report was based on facts, but the truth it contained was distorted by timidity. Its key-note is the "howbeit" in v. 28 (R. V.). There are many men who are always running up against this word, or our modern equivalent, "but." They say, "I know I ought to join the church, *but* — ." "Family prayers is a beautiful custom, *but* — ." "I understand what a good thing it is to attend Sunday school, *but* — ." For all such men there is one sad and final "but": "Almost, but — lost."

The Israelites found no strong people or fenced cities in the wilderness, just because it was a desert, not worth owning or fortifying. Those obstacles were proofs of the desirableness of Canaan. "*Good* things are hard," as Plato was fond of saying.

The timid spies were like Elisha's servant (2 Kings 6: 16, 17), who saw the enemy, but did not see the heavenly chariots and horsemen ranged on the hills round about. They saw the giants, but were blind to God.

Many men consider it a proof of their acuteness that they can see difficulties and dangers in every undertaking. Really, it is one of the easiest things in the world to hunt up obstacles. The hard and praiseworthy thing is to find ways over obstacles, and encouragements to advance.

III. **A Courageous Report.** — V. 30. **And Caleb.** A Kenizzite, of Edom, but attached to the tribe of Judah. **Stilled the people before Moses.** Evidently they had burst out in a cry of despair and fear. They felt as one might imagine an escaped slave, who, after terrible hardships, had made his way to a free country, only to find it closed against him. **And said, Let us go up at once, and possess it.** Caleb talked *can* and not *can't.* **For we are well able to overcome it.** Forty years later, Caleb, then an old man of eighty, proved his brave words by conquering the very region that had terrified the ten spies, driving out the gigantic Anakim, and making his ancestral Hebron his own (Josh. 14: 6–14).

Can versus Can't.

HOW COURAGE CONQUERS. 1. *It acknowledges difficulties.* Caleb agreed that there was something to overcome; "but," said he, "we are well able to overcome it."

2. *It believes in itself.* Napoleon gained his battles largely by his glorious confidence that he *could* gain them. Thoreau stuck to his making of lead pencils till he had made a perfect one, and then made no more. He wanted no uneasy sense of defeat to weaken his future.

3. *It believes in God.* "It was because Caleb knew that he was only the conducting wire, through which the might of God was brought to bear upon his adversaries, that he was so bold." — *Taylor.*

IV. **A Cowardly Report.** — Vs. 31–33. **31. But the men that went up with him said.** What follows may be a summary of the second report, this phrase simply implying "the other explorers." **We be not able to go up against the people.** That was true, but only because they left God out of the "we."

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32. And they [1] brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched spied out unto the children of Is'ra-el, saying, the land, through which we have gone to search it, to spy it out, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and [2] all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature.

33. And there we saw the giants, Neph'i-lim, [3] the sons of A'năk, which come of the giants: Neph'i-lim: and we were in our own sight [4] as grasshoppers, and so we were [5] in their sight.

1. And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and [6] the people wept that night.

2. [7] And all the children of Is'ra-el murmured against Mō'ses, and against Aar'on: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of E'gypt! or [8] would God we had died in this wilderness!

[1] Num. 14: 36, 37.
[2] Am. 2: 9.
[3] Deut. 1: 28.
[4] Isa. 40: 22.
[5] 1 Sam. 17: 42.
[6] Num. 11: 4.
[7] Ex. 16: 2; Num. 16: 41; Psa. 106: 25.
[8] Vs. 28, 29.

32. **And they brought up an evil report of the land.** The report was evil, not because it was untrue, but because it stopped short of God. The cities *were* walled, but they were to fall at the blast of a ram's horn. **The land . . . eateth up the inhabitants.** Elliott thinks this refers to the constant strife among tribes contending for the land (Lev. 26: 38), though it might mean an unhealthy land, or a land of scarcity. **And all the people . . . are men of great stature.** "Literally, 'men of measures.'" — *Elliott.*

33. **And there we saw the giants** (R. V. Nephilim), "The Nephilim are the primeval tyrants mentioned in Gen. 6: 4." — *Pulpit Commentary.* "They are analogous to the demigods of the nations. It made the Anakim seem more dreadful thus to suggest that there was something supernatural and uncanny about them." — *Hastings' Bible Dictionary.* **And we were in our own sight as grasshoppers.** "Possibly the Hebrews were at this time somewhat ill-developed as a race, bearing the marks of their slavery. But we can hardly suppose that the Amorites, much less the Hittites, were of overpassing stature." — *Watson.* **And so we were in their sight.** No wonder; men are largely taken at their own estimation.

Grasshopper Men.

THE CAUSES OF COWARDICE. 1. Cowardice is born of the man and not of circumstances. Two men, like Caleb and a faithless spy, may pass through the same experiences, but one of them may come out a hero and the other a poltroon! Cowards are like a palsied man using a field-glass. The whole horizon seems to tremble, but really it is only his hand. Most of our anxieties are vague bogies, Nephilim that we can scarcely name, like the cloud monsters seen by travelers from Alpine heights, that prove to be only enormous shadows of themselves.

2. Cowardice is born of a false humility. Men might well say, "We be not able," if they were to combat sin and misfortune in their own strength. But they *are* able, because God is with them (2 Cor. 12: 10).

3. Cowardice is born of exaggeration. We are not to "think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think," but if we think of ourselves as grasshoppers, we shall "start at a grasshopper." We are not to underrate other men, but if we look up to them as giants, we shall cease to look up to God.

4. Cowardice is born of forgetfulness of God. Only a few inches make the difference between a giant and a dwarf. The differences between men seem very slight when one looks at them from the side of God. But cowards, like these spies, are half blind, and no wonder they see "men as trees walking."

V. **A Cowardly People.** — Vs. 1–4. 1. **And the people wept that night.** "It was a sad outburst of cowardice and childishness — a whole army blubbering at the prospect of a battle." — *Hamilton.* Well might they weep, but at their own lack of faith.

PRACTICAL. It would be very instructive if we should keep a ledger of our weeping, our fears, and our worries. We should find most of them baseless.

2. **Murmured against Moses.** Since he had led them under God's directions, this was murmuring against God. **Would God we had died in this wilderness!** God

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3. And wherefore hath (doth) the LORD brought (bring) us unto this land, to fall by the sword; that our (Our) wives and our children should (little ones shall) be a prey? were it not better for us to return into E'gypt?

4. And they said one to another, [1] Let us make a captain, and [2] let us return into E'gypt.

[1] Neh. 9: 17. [2] Deut. 17: 16; Acts 7: 39.

heard their prayer, and granted it by keeping them in the wilderness till their death. "I wish I were dead!" men often say; but would they not be terror-stricken if they thought God would take them at their word?

3. **Wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword?** In their fear, they spoke as if they were already in Canaan, confronted by the wrathful giants. **That our wives and our children should be a prey.** It is harder to have faith for our dear ones than for ourselves.

4. **Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.** "This was, perhaps, the bitterest hour in Moses' life. They had proposed to elect a captain before, but it was when he was away; this proposal was made before his face." — *Meyer.*

The Revolt. They knew Moses well enough to know that he would not remain their captain if they returned to Egypt or stayed in the desert contrary to God's will. "Neither is it possible to retain Christ as our captain and also to make this world our home. For the great enterprise of spiritual redemption alone will Christ be our leader." — *Watson.*

MODERN APPLICATIONS. We sin like the Israelites when we fretfully ask, "'Why doth the Lord bring me into this land' of sickness, or poverty, or failure?" Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? What earthly judge would permit such insults in his court?

The Israelites failed to realize that they were going to Canaan, not to live in ease and safety, but to bless the world. Self-sacrifice makes heroes, and the Israelites' selfishness was the root of their cowardice.

"The ten looked at God through the difficulties, as when you look at the sun through a reversed telescope, and it seems indefinitely distant and shorn of its glory; while the two looked at difficulties through God." — *Rev. F. B. Meyer.*

LIBRARY. See illustrations of courage in Peloubet's *Suggestive Illustrations on Acts* (Holman), chap. 4.

Many speak about the Christian life just as the cowardly spies spoke about Canaan. "Become a Christian," they say, "and your life will be cold, narrow, hard, full of deprivations and difficulties." On the contrary, "No Canaan of success, in any pursuit, can be gained save by the conquest of the Anakim." — *Taylor.* Sir Humphry Davy said that his most important discoveries had been suggested by his failures, which he conquered. Curran, roused by ridicule of his stuttering, became a great orator. See many illustrations in Marden's *Success* ($1.25, W. A. Wilde Company) and Smiles' *Self-Help.*

VI. **The Penalty of Cowardice.** — Num. 14: 5–45. Caleb and Joshua renewed their encouragements. Moses and Aaron fell on their faces in despair and grief. All was in vain; the people were even on the point of stoning them. Suddenly, as twice before in great crises (Lev. 10: 2; Num. 11: 1), the people were terrified by a dazzling light from the tabernacle. Again, as on the occasion of the golden calf, Jehovah offered to destroy the people and make of Moses the second Abraham of a new and nobler race. In a passage which Meyer declares one of the grandest in the whole Bible, Moses rejected the alluring offer, and pleaded with God not to give the Egyptians and Canaanites a chance to deride the failure of his plans.

Jehovah's decision shows how God can at the same time be merciful and just, for he answered Moses' prayer, yet punished the people. The decree was that only Caleb and Joshua, and those twenty years old or younger (who probably had not joined the revolt), should ever see Canaan. For forty years, beginning with the Exodus, — a year for every day of the spies' absence, — the Israelites were to live in the wilderness, till all the older generation had perished. To attest the verdict, a plague raged among the people, and slew the ten cowardly spies.

A Forty-Years Sentence.

Struck with a too-late repentance, the anxious nation determined to go forward, even against Moses' protest and without the ark. But as they rushed through the pass that led

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northward, the forces of the region fell upon them and defeated them terribly. They learned that God's judgment was final.

WAS THE PUNISHMENT TOO SEVERE? No. *First*, it was necessary. Nations cannot be made or remade in a day. If the Israelites had been admitted to Canaan at that time, they would have "found an excuse to call it a desert." It takes God many years to make a diamond, and character, a far more precious jewel, cannot be made in a day. *Second*, it was just. The Israelites had disobeyed a God who had proved himself wise, loving, and powerful by a series of miraculous proofs such as, save in the life of Christ, the world has never seen. "The seven days in which Miriam was shut out from the camp were the days of her purification. The forty years of patient pilgrimage and penance were the purification of the tribes." — *Mrs. Whitney. Third*, it was merciful. As Watson says: "The desert was God's, as well as the land flowing with milk and honey." They could learn to know God and trust him quite as well in Paran as in Canaan.

LESSONS IN COURAGE TAUGHT AT KADESH. 1. Cowardice is constantly shutting men out of Canaans, — the Canaans of worldly success, of influence, honor, love, heaven.

2. The young are wise in their daring. Every older Christian, too, may be a Moses or a Caleb, understanding the perils, yet preserving the youthful faith that ventures on what seems impossible.

> "O young Man of Galilee, aye a young man,
> That never grew old, serving God, —
> Not the young with their follies are under Thy ban,
> But the hearts that are seared, and the timid, whose plan
> Weakly tries to do only the things that it can!
> Their feet Thou wilt guide, and their zeal Thou wilt fan,
> As the young grow old, serving God."
>
> — *Amos R. Wells.*

3. The ten spies, who did not dare march forward under God's protection, died where they were, without his protection, from the plague. Cowards are like a man who, in backing away from a barking dog, falls over a precipice.

4. No coward is necessary to God. He can always afford to wait, forty years or four hundred, for brave men. It is we who cannot afford to let him wait.

5. It is reported of one of the most famous volunteer officers in the Spanish-American war that a charge over a barbed-wire fence, in his first engagement, transformed him, from a man almost beside himself with agitation, into the most cool and intrepid of all our commanders. Usually, however, no single dash, such as the Israelites made at Kadesh, can win courage out of cowardice; but only a long training of the will.

LIBRARY. Stephen Crane's powerful story, *The Red Badge of Courage*.

6. It is a false and fruitless courage that is not based on God. Even the Church and individual Christians, when they take up quarrels which God does not call on them to take up, or use weapons which God does not approve, find themselves promptly defeated.

7. There is a time for obedience, and if we let that time go by without obeying, the loss is irreparable.

> "He who will not when he may,
> When he will he shall have nay."

This event should be a stern warning to us all (Heb. 4: 11).

LESSON IX. — August 31.

THE BRAZEN SERPENT. — Numbers 21 : 1–9.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*** — JOHN 3: 14, 15.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Arouse Interest by showing a sketch map of the region covered in to-day's lesson, and asking the scholars to look at it so attentively that they can reproduce it. Then place before the class a sheet of blank paper mounted on a board, and get them to recon-

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 6–8; John 3: 14, 15; Isa. 45: 22.

THE SECTION

includes Num. 15–20 and 21: 1–9, together with Deut. 1: 46; 2: 1; 8: 1–5, and John 3: 14–17.

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struct the map, first dotting in the outlines, and not fixing them till the class is sure they are right. Mark Jerusalem, the Dead Sea, the Red Sea, Kadesh, Arad's country, Edom, and Mt. Hor, together with the Israelites' route. Carry along the history step by step with the map. Mark with red the place of the fiery serpents.

Close with the analogy to Christ and the cross, and an earnest appeal to the class, that they look to Christ for their salvation.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

Subjects to be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

What did the Israelites gain from their forty years in the desert?
Some account of the Arabian deserts.
The reasons why the Edomites would not let the Israelites pass through their country.
What answers to prayer have we studied this quarter?
How serpents are like sins.
How Christ saves men, as illustrated by to-day's lesson.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. Aaron died on the first day of the fifth month (July-August) of the fortieth year after the Israelites left Egypt (Num. 33: 38); and they mourned for him thirty days before they started from Mt. Hor, the latter part of August. The event of our lesson occurred in September (B. C. 1452, according to the common chronology).

Place. The serpents attacked the people in the southern part of the valley of Arabah, which extends from the Dead Sea to the head of the Gulf of Akabah, or eastern branch of the Red Sea. Through this valley was probably once the outlet of the Jordan and Dead Sea.

PRONUNCIATIONS.

Akäbäh′, Ar′ăbäh, E′dŏm, Hôr (o as in for), Id′ŭmē′a, Kā′dĕsh Bär′nĕä, Mĭr′ĭăm, Sē′ir.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: A Lesson in Faith.

I. THE PUNISHMENT OF PRIDE (Num. 15–20).

The revolt of Korah. Moses at Meribah.
Aaron's rod that budded. The repulse from Edom.
The death of Miriam. The death of Aaron.

II. FAITH CONQUERS THE CANAANITES (vs. 1–3).

The Israelites in distress.
The Israelites praying.
The Israelites triumphant.

III. FAITHLESSNESS AND ITS PUNISHMENT (vs. 4–6).

The difficult journey. The light bread.
The fiery serpents.

IV. THE LOOK OF FAITH (vs. 7–9).

The prayer of repentance.
The prayer of intercession. Life for a look.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

A realistic description of the Israelites' wilderness life in Geikie's *Hours with the Bible* ($7.50, Pott). *Commentaries* on Numbers and on John 3: 14, 15; especially, on the latter, Marcus Dods in the *Expositor's Bible*. Walker's *Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation*. Peloubet's *Suggestive Illustrations* on John 3: 14, 15 (Holman). Meyer's *Like Christ* (Sixth Day). Sermons by Finney, Moody, Trench, Spurgeon, Pentecost. Trumbull on serpent symbolism in *The Threshold Covenant* ($2.50, Scribners). Descriptions of the region studied, in Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine;* Palmer's *Desert of the Exodus*. Poems by Bonar ("The Substitute," "The Sin-bearer"), How ("The Death of Christ"), Milman ("Good Friday"). *Paradise Lost*, book 9.

PICTURES.

The Brazen Serpent, Michael Angelo (fresco in the Sistine Chapel at Rome); Gerard Van Meire, Doré. Photograph of the scene as shown at the Ober-Ammergau Passion Play. Botticelli's *Punishment of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram* (fresco, Sistine Chapel).

I. **The Punishment of Pride.** — Numbers 15–20. The Israelites, by their lack of faith at Kadesh Barnea, proved themselves unworthy to enter Canaan, and were justly condemned to thirty-eight years more of their wilderness training school. God's purpose (Deut. 8: 2) was to "humble" them and "prove" them. The delay did this, their simple fare, their hard life, the many dangers of the desert, the elevating services of the sanctuary, the instructions and inspiration of their God-led leader, Moses. In all this God "bare them as a nursing father in the wilderness" (Acts 13: 18, R. V. margin).

Few incidents are recorded of these thirty-eight years. Their very monotony was part of the training. Kadesh was their center and rallying ground, and possibly the tabernacle

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1. And when I king A'rad the Ca'naan-ite, the Ca'naan-ite, the king of A'rad, which dwelt in the south, South, heard tell that Is'ra-el came [2] by the way of the spies; then Ath'a-rim; and he fought against Is'ra-el, and took some some of them prisoners. captive.

[1] Num. 33: 40; Judg. 1: 16. [2] Num. 13: 21.

was permanently there. Nevertheless so vast a host, about two million souls, must roam widely to obtain food for themselves and grazing ground for their cattle. Some of these wanderings, extending as far as Ezion Geber on the eastern arm of the Red Sea (1 Kings 9: 26), are given in Num. 33: 19–36.

SIX EVENTS stand out in this long period, chiefly at the end of it.

1. *The Revolt of Korah*, chapter 16. Korah the Levite, Dathan, Abiram, and On, with other princes or head men, 250 in all, took advantage of the people's discontent with the wilderness, and rebelled against Moses. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were swallowed up in the earth before the people, as a punishment of their pride and a terrible warning, while the other rebels were destroyed by fire and plague. This fearful event taught the nation humility before God, and under the circumstances the severity of the punishment was as justifiable as is the death penalty for revolt in an army or for mutiny on board ship.

LIBRARY. Illuminating chapters in Kingsley's *Gospel of the Pentateuch* (Macmillan), Maurice's *Patriarchs and Lawgivers of the Old Testament* (Macmillan), and Mrs. Whitney's *The Open Mystery* (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.). Poem by Keble quoted in *The Poet's Bible;* also his "The Church in the Wilderness" in *The Christian Year.*

2. *The Budding of Aaron's Rod*, chapter 17. Further to confirm Aaron's supremacy and lower the pride of the princes, twelve rods, one for each tribe, were marked and laid before the ark over night. In the morning it was found that Aaron's alone had changed, having become an almond branch, full of buds, blossoms, and fruit.

LIBRARY. Ruskin, in *Ethics of the Dust*, on rods and branches as types of perfect human strength.

3. *The Death of Miriam*, the sister of Moses, at Kadesh (Num. 20: 1). See Coster's poem, "The Dying Memories of Miriam," in *The Poet's Bible.*

4. *The Murmuring at Kadesh* (Num. 20: 2–13) because of the failure of the stream that burst from the cliff there, and Moses' sin which excluded him from the Promised Land. The sin seems to have consisted either in angrily *smiting* the rock when God had told him merely to *speak* to it, or in his presumptuously taking the miracle to himself, "Shall *we* bring you forth water out of this rock?" Evidently it was a sin of pride, and deserved its heavy punishment. This was the *second* stream called Meribah ("strife"); see Ex. 17: 7.

LIBRARY. Chapters on this sin in volumes on Moses by Oosterzee, Meyer, Hamilton, Taylor. Chapter in Whitney's *The Open Mystery*. Browning's fine passage in *Men and Women*, ending "Never dares the man put off the prophet."

5. *The Repulse from Edom*, Num. 20: 14–21. Remembering their severe repulse when they attempted, thirty-eight years before, to press into Canaan by a march northward from Kadesh (Num. 14: 40–45), the Israelites asked permission to go northeastward, through the land of Edom, which stretched in a narrow strip from the Dead Sea to the eastern arm of the Red Sea. They promised repeatedly not to touch wells or crops, but the Edomites churlishly refused, and even came out against Israel with a strong force. These Edomites were descendants of Esau (Gen. 25: 30) and so were related to the Israelites, who were forbidden to fight with their brethren (Deut. 2: 4, 5), and therefore were compelled to make the long journey around the southern extremity of their country. This sin of the Edomites was also based on pride, and was punished by centuries of alienation from Israel, and finally by their complete destruction as a nation.

6. *The Death of Aaron* (Num. 20: 22–29), on Mt. Hor, on the way southward from Kadesh, on the western border of Edom. Eleazar, Aaron's son, was made high priest.

LIBRARY. Whittier's "'The Rock' in El Ghor." Sonnet by Wilton.

II. **Faith conquers the Canaanites.** — Vs. 1–3. **1. And when king Arad.** Rather, as in R. V., "the Canaanite, the king of Arad." "The district of Arad appears to have extended to the southern frontier of Canaan." — *Elliot.* **Which dwelt in the south.** The Negeb or South Country of Palestine, to reach which would require a march northward from Mt. Hor, where Aaron died. **Heard tell that Israel came by way of the spies.** "Atharim" (R. V.) may mean "spies," or it may be the name of some unknown locality. **Then he fought against Israel.** Probably as the Israelites, repulsed from Edom, were attempting to force their way northward.

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2. [1] And Is'ra-el vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then [2] I will utterly destroy their cities.

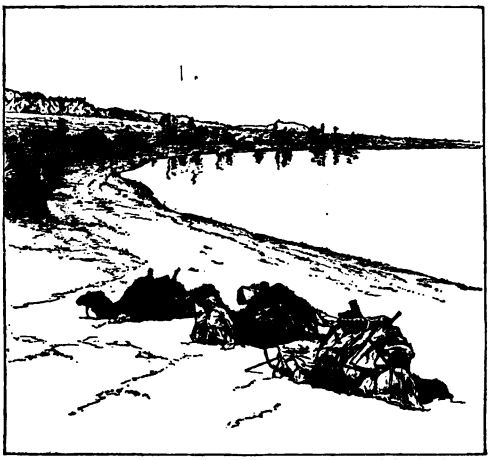
3. And the LORD hearkened to the voice of Is'ra-el, and delivered up the Cā'năan-ītes; and they utterly destroyed them and their cities: and he called the name of the place was called [a] Hor'mah.

4. And [3] they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of to the Red sea, Sea, to [4] compass the land of E'dom: and the soul of the people was much [b] discouraged because of the way.

[1] Gen. 28: 20; Judg. 11: 30.
[2] Lev. 27: 28.
[3] Num. 20: 22.
[4] Judg. 11: 18.
a That is, *utter destruction.*
b Or, *was impatient*, Hebrew, *was shortened.*

2. And Israel vowed a vow. The Bible is full of special vows, and God evidently honors them. There is abundant spiritual justification of such special, definite promises as the Christian Endeavor pledge. **If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand.** This is not in the bargaining spirit. The people must conquer, before they could serve God with their conquests. **Then I will utterly destroy their cities.** This was not vindictiveness, but ordinary prudence. The later history of the nation proved over and over how necessary for the purity of Israel was the utter destruction of idolaters. It is mistaken mercy not to cut down weeds and kill poisonous snakes.

A Vow and Victory.



From a Photograph by Wilson.
By the Gulf of Akabah.

3. And they utterly destroyed them and their cities. This probably occurred in the later time described in Josh. 12: 14; Judg. 1: 17. **And he called the name of the place Hormah.** "A devoted thing," "something vowed."

LESSONS FROM HORMAH. 1. The Canaanites saw that they and the Israelites could not live in the same country. Wherever two opposing ideals come together, there is an "irrepressible conflict." You cannot mix oil and water. No nation and no man can serve two masters.

2. No Canaan is to be won without fighting. Is it the Canaan of an education? The Canaanites of sloth, and often of poverty, range themselves before it. Is it a lovely home? You must fight carelessness and selfishness. Is it the Canaan of a noble country? There are the Canaanites of ignorance, mammon, intemperance.

3. God permitted the defeat, in order to drive his people closer to himself. How often would you think of God if it were never necessary to go to him with petitions?

4. In dealing with an evil, we must utterly destroy it. Ancient fable tells of a many-armed monster from whom a single arm might be cut off, but at once two more grew in its place; the only way was to cut off its head. It must be *total* abstinence from intoxicants, yea and nay in the matter of profanity, honesty even as to a pin, and purity even to a thought. Our terms, as well as Grant's, must be "unconditional surrender."

5. "Don't play there," said a little girl to her brother; "that is papa's kneeling place." And so the Israelites were far more likely to remember their vow and God's deliverance because they called that spot "the Vow Place."

III. **Faithlessness and its Punishment.**—Vs. 4–6. **4. And they journeyed,**

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5. And the people [1] spake against God, and against Mō'ses, [2] Wherefore have ye brought us up out of E'gypt, to die in the wilderness? for *there is* no bread, *neither is there any* water; and [3] our soul loatheth this light bread.

6. And [4] the LORD sent [5] fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Is'ra-el died.

[1] Psa. 78: 19. [2] Ex. 16: 3; 17: 3. [3] Num. 11: 6. [4] 1 Cor. 10: 9. [5] Deut. 8: 15.

after Aaron's death. **From mount Hor.** A well-marked mountain, rising 4,000 feet above the Arabah. Steps in the rock lead to an Arab sanctuary said to cover the grave of Aaron. **By the way of the Red sea,** or Yâm Suph (Sea of Weeds), both names springing from its abundant red coral. The eastern arm, the Gulf of Akabah, is here meant. They rounded Edom at a point only a few hours distant from the Red Sea, passed through the opening made by the Wady Ithm and went up on the eastern side of Mount Seir (Edom), "following very much the line of route taken in modern times by pilgrims between Mecca and Damascus." — *Taylor.* Passing, however, somewhat east of it, since it goes through Edom. **To compass the land of Edom.** For the reason related above. Idumea is the modern name of the country, — the Greek form of the Hebrew "Edom." Mount Seir is its backbone. **And the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.** They were turning their backs on Canaan and marching directly away from it. Moreover, they were marching through a most desolate region, the worst portion of the plain called the Arabah.

Doubt and Discouragement.

"The surface is in general loose gravel and stones, everywhere furrowed and torn with the beds of torrents. Now and then a lone shrub of the ghudah is almost the only trace of vegetation." — *Robinson.* The heat also is almost unbearable, and the terrible sirocco seems constantly blowing. The hostile Edomites may have harassed them from the hills. "The tribes must have suffered enormously and been greatly reduced in number. As for cattle, we must conclude that hardly any survived." — *Watson.*

PRACTICAL. When Longfellow sung, "Learn to labor and to wait," he knew well that the latter is the harder. It is not toil, but hope deferred, Canaan postponed, that makes the heart sick. The only remedy for this discouragement is to choose Christ for our Way; and then, though we travel forever, we carry our Canaan with us.

ILLUSTRATION. Spurgeon urges that there is nothing that one cannot make a way through, if he can find something harder to bore with. The Mount Cenis tunnel through the Alps pierced the hardest of rocks because the boring tools were edged with diamond. Thus faith in Christ will make a way through all difficulties.

5. **And the people spake against God.** They "tempted the Lord" (1 Cor. 10: 9). Speaking of God after a human fashion, he was tempted to give them up as hopeless. **And against Moses.** What a compliment, thus to be coupled with God, even in reproaches! **Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt, to die in the wilderness?** Thus they turned God's greatest miracle and benefit into a complaint. So a man sometimes asks, "Why was I brought into life at all, if my life must be so miserable?" while at the very moment he is speaking, the man holds his life so precious that he would do anything to preserve it. **This light bread.** "This vile bread." Manna, which could sustain them through forty years of travel in the wilderness, could not have deserved this taunt. Indeed, the spirit of faultfinding grows with whatever it feeds on, though it eat at Delmonico's.

6. **And the Lord sent.** It is not necessary to suppose that the serpents were created for this occasion, but the Lord brought them to this place, or he permitted the people in their blind obstinancy to run into them, withdrawing his protection from them. **Fiery serpents.** "Hebrew, 'the serpents, the seraphim' (the burning ones)." — *Elliott.* See Deut. 8: 15; Isa. 14: 29; 30: 6. Probably a definite kind of serpent is meant, called "fiery" because of bright red coloring upon their heads, the glistening of the sun on their scales, or the burning of their bites. Travelers testify that the region about the head of the Gulf of Akabah is still infested with snakes. Burckhardt found on the shore the trails of serpents crossing each other in many directions. "In the Arabah and whole North Arabian region the cobra, or naja haie, is common, and is superstitiously dreaded." — *Watson.* "The haie is one of the fiercest of poison-bearing snakes, seldom running from an adversary. Its length is about five or six feet." — *J. G. Wood.* "In India it is estimated that several

Fiery Serpents.

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7. [1] Therefore And the people came to Mō'ses, and said, We have sinned, for because [2] we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; [3] pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Mō'ses prayed for the people.

[1] Psa. 78: 34. [2] V. 5. [3] Ex. 8: 8, 28; 1 Sam. 12: 19; 1 Kings 13: 6; Acts 8: 24.

thousand people annually die from the bite of the cobra." — *Packard's Zoology*. In Sir Risdon Bennett's *Diseases of the Bible* is a suggestion that the fiery serpent was the Guinea worm, *Filaria Medinensis*, a thread-like worm from four inches to four feet long and about a tenth of an inch broad. It abounds in the Arabian Peninsula, and, entering through the feet and legs and especially through infected drinking water, produces burning inflammation. **And they bit the people.** "Their own ingratitude and obstinancy and unbelief came back upon them in the visitation of mean, creeping, stinging, deadly creatures of the ground; as they had assailed and wounded with bitterness and burning reproach, they were themselves assailed and wounded." — *Mrs. Whitney*.



Serpent Charmers.

LACK OF FAITH AND ITS CONSEQUENCES. 1. The Israelites' sin sprung from unwarranted despondency. There were real causes for it, but there were far stronger reasons why they should have trusted God.

ILLUSTRATION. "A friend of mine received a letter from a missionary on the west coast of Africa, in which some serpent eggs were contained. He laid them carefully aside; but one day he discovered, to his dismay, that the heat of the drawer had hatched them into serpents, and there was a heap of crawling things before his eyes. So despondency is a serpent's egg, which, if we are not careful, will hatch in our hearts into a serpent itself, and poison us with its venomous bite." — *Taylor*.

2. All sin is like a serpent in its crafty, sinuous action, fascinating to the eye, and like venom in its effect.

ILLUSTRATION. Describing the bite of the Brazilian fer-de-lance, J. G. Wood says: "Even in those cases where the sufferer recovers for the time, the system is terribly injured, and the latent virulence of the poison can hardly be eliminated from the frame even at the cost of painful boils and ulcerations which last for many years. The nervous system is also much affected, as giddiness and paralysis are among the usual consequences of the strong venom which this reptile extracts, by some inexplicable chemistry, from perfectly harmless food." As terrible and persistent are the results of sin.

ILLUSTRATION. Many snake-charmers, before they handle their venomous pets, remove their poison sacs and thus render them harmless. You can't do that with sin serpents.

3. If the Israelites had had faith, they could easily have conquered even this peril, according to the promise put into words long afterwards (Mark 16: 18): "They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them." Paul proved the truth of this (Acts 28: 3–6).

ILLUSTRATION. Dr. Chapman, in *From Life to Life* ($1.00, United Society of Christian Endeavor), describes the washing of the cobras in the London Zoological Gardens. The lid is raised a trifle, the deadly serpent sticks out his head, and quick as an arrow an attendant grips its neck. He pulls it out and washes it as unconcerned as if it were a kitten; his peace of mind is due to the power of his grip. So there is a grasp of Christian faith by which we can lay hold even of "the old serpent, the Devil."

IV. **The Look of Faith.** — Vs. 7–9. 7. **The people came to Moses.** Moses was

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8. And the LORD said unto Mō'ses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole; standard: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon seeth it, shall live.

9. And [1] Mō'ses made a serpent of brass, and put set it upon a pole, the standard: and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld looked unto the serpent of brass, he lived.

[1] 2 Kings 18: 4; John 3: 14, 15.

120 years old, and some have thought that Joshua was already leading the people, more especially since Moses' fall at Meribah; but the people came instinctively to him in need. A strong man can afford to bide his time. **We have sinned.** The Israelites began to see that the real danger was not the serpents, but the sin that led to the serpents, and it was to open their eyes to this fact that the serpents were sent. **For we have spoken against the Lord.** Confession, to be worth anything, must be definite, like this, and not general. **And against thee.** Most sins are against men as well as God. It is not enough to ask God to forgive us, but we must go also, as these Israelites did, to the men against whom we have sinned. **Pray unto the Lord.** Moses did not ask them to pray for themselves, partly because they had already virtually done that in asking him to pray for them, and partly because it was best for the people to recognize his spiritual leadership.

Two Petitions.

PRACTICAL. The life of Moses abounds in examples of the value of intercessory prayer. Such prayer is sadly neglected. It is a good rule never to pray for yourself without offering a petition at least as long, earnest, and explicit, for somebody else. See Andrew Murray's *Ministry of Intercession* (75 cents, Revell).

8. **Make thee a fiery serpent,** of brass (v. 9), that is, of copper or bronze, which the word usually means. **And set it upon a pole.** "A banner-pole." — *Geikie.* "Often their shape was something like a cross; at least, the object on the pole was a fixed one, of some solid substance, and not, as with us, a flying or fluttering flag." — *Prof. I. H. Hall.* The pole was to elevate it, so that all might see.

9. **And Moses made a serpent of brass.** It existed up to the time of King Hezekiah, who wisely destroyed it, because the people had begun to worship it as an idol (2 Kings 18: 4). The author of the apocryphal *Book of Wisdom* wisely says: "He that turned himself toward it was not saved by the thing that he saw, but by thee, that art the Saviour of all" (16: 7). **If a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.** "As the herald passed along, what a scene the camp would present! There you might see a man all but dead, raising himself upon his arm, and straining his glazed eyes, if haply he might behold the glittering symbol; yonder another, wiping away his tears of anguish to look upon the glorious object; and yonder still, a mother with her child, eagerly pointing to the flag-staff, if perchance she may fix her loved one's gaze upon the mystic healer." — *Taylor.*

ILLUSTRATION. If any doubt this miracle, Mrs. Whitney bids them imagine that in some way all knowledge of the electric car and the telephone should perish from the earth, and only a brief, unexplained statement be handed down to posterity. Who would believe that men once traveled by an invisible force, and sent their audible words on wires around the globe? "We are living in miracle all the time."

A FOREGLEAM OF CALVARY. Christ himself gave the interpretation of this event in John 3: 14, 15, — "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

1. The serpent was not the symbol or likeness of Christ, but of sin and its penalty. So Christ was made "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8: 3), he was made sin for us, "who knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5: 21). Thus, to take up the thread of a still more ancient prophecy, did the seed of the woman bruise the serpent's head (Gen. 3: 15).

ILLUSTRATION. Strangely enough, in Egypt, whence the Israelites had come, and elsewhere in the East, the serpent was regarded as the emblem of life as well as of death, because the physicians soon discovered the medicinal value of poisons. To this day a serpent, wreathed around a staff, is the recognized symbol of the healing art.

2. The brazen serpent "was hung up there on the banner-staff as a trophy, to show that for the poison there was healing."—*Alford.* So Christ's cross has become the most conspicuous and triumphant object of the world's history.

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ILLUSTRATION. Said Washington, at the outbreak of the American Revolution, "Let us raise a standard to which the wise and honest may repair." These words are inscribed over the Washington Arch in New York City. Similarly, many noble standards have been set up in the course of history, but they all bow before the standard of the cross.

3. "It must be assumed that there was repentance and faith on the part of those who looked." — *Watson*. Without these, the mere sight of the brazen serpent would avail nothing. And likewise the mere knowledge of Christ is useless without repentance of sin and faith in the Saviour.

4. Still the salvation comes, as this illustration of the brazen serpent makes clear, not from anything that we can do, but from what Christ is and does.

ILLUSTRATION. "It is not I who deserve credit for the delight which I have in looking upon an exquisite picture, but rather the artist whose work the picture is; and, in like manner, it is not the sinner who deserves honor for his salvation, but rather the Christ through looking to whom he has obtained it." — *Taylor*.

Life for a Look. 5. "*Every* one that is bitten" was invited to look at the brazen serpent, and be healed. So Christ has been raised upon the cross, that "*whosoever* believeth might have everlasting life." No one ever looked in vain.

6. It needs only a look. Every evangelist and missionary can give proofs of the possibility of sudden conversions.

7. But it does need the look. That was the test of the Israelites' faith, whether they would be willing to do something so useless, seemingly, as to look at a brass serpent. So "the preaching of the cross is to them that are perishing foolishness" (1 Cor. 1: 18). They want to do some great thing themselves, and not merely accept Christ as their Saviour.

8. And the look of faith toward Christ's cross does actually and always heal men of their sin.

ILLUSTRATION. Marconi's wonderful invention of wireless telegraphy has aroused a scientific controversy, some holding that the mysterious communication passes through the air, and others thinking that it runs through the earth. Marconi committed himself to neither theory, but satisfied himself with pointing to his invention and saying, "It works." No one understands just how Christ's atonement frees men from sin, but innumerable saved lives prove that it does.

"There is life for a look at the crucified One,
There is life at this moment for thee;
Then look, sinner, look unto him and be saved, —
Unto him who was nailed to the tree!"

LESSON X. — September 7.

THE PROPHET LIKE MOSES.

Deuteronomy 18: 9–19.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.*** JOHN 6: 14.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Win Attention by asking the scholars to name all the great orations they can think of, and tell them that they are to study one of the very greatest.

Discuss Briefly the purpose and scope of Deuteronomy.

Chart the Lesson as you proceed, on a blackboard or pencil tablet, representing the Israelites as a circle, the evil elements against which Moses warns them as arrows aimed at the circle, each arrow named, and

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 17–19; Heb. 1: 1, 2; Eph. 2: 19, 20.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. — Deuteronomy is mainly occupied with a series of addresses by Moses to the people, delivered during the last forty days before the death of the speaker. It fills the slight gap between Numbers and Joshua.

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the opposing strength of the nation as circles surrounding the Israelites, named "a spiritual religion," "obedience," "the prophets," "Christ."

Close with an application to the dangers that assail your scholars' lives; Christ alone can keep them safe and pure.

THE SECTION.

Deut. 18: 9–22, with the announcement of the fulfilment of this prophecy in Peter's sermon, Acts 3: 18–23.

Deuteronomy, "the second law," is the Greek (Septuagint) translation of the words "a copy of this law" (Deut. 17: 18). The book repeats the laws of Moses, but in a form better adapted to popular use, and more fitted to the new conditions soon to arise in Canaan. The traditional view is that the book was written by Moses, all but the account of his own death, and read to the people, as itself declares, just before their entrance upon Canaan. Many modern scholars believe, however, that, though based on older documents, some of which Moses wrote, the book in its present shape was written after the reforms of Hezekiah and before the reign of Josiah, 621 B. C., when it was discovered in the temple. Even if this view should be proved true, the book would remain one of the noblest portions of the inspired Bible. Charles Kingsley calls it "the grandest and deepest book of the Old Testament, the sum and substance of all political philosophy"; and Prof. R. G. Moulton, who describes it as "the most *spiritual* book of the Old Testament," further exalts it as exhibiting most perfectly that "rush of speech" which belongs to true oratory, and as far superior to the greatest secular orations, such as those of Burke or Demosthenes.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

Subjects to be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

Forms of idolatry practised in Moses' day.
Why was idolatry forbidden the Israelites?
What are some forms of modern idolatry?
What kind of men were the prophets?
How was Christ like Moses?
The penalties of all idolatry.
The rewards of obeying Christ.

Place. — The plains of Moab on the east of the Jordan, opposite Jericho; closing with Moses' death on Mt. Nebo.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: A Lesson in National Safety and Purity.

I. SEPARATION FROM IDOLS (vs. 9–11).

Nine forms of heathenism.
Idolatry on modern mission fields.
Idolatry in our own land.

II. THE WEAKNESS OF IDOLATRY (vs. 12–14).

The idolaters to be conquered.
Modern applications.

III. GUIDANCE IN A PURE RELIGION (vs. 15–18).

The promise of prophets.
The promise of a Messiah.
How Christ was like Moses.

IV. PUNISHMENT FOR DISOBEDIENCE (v. 19).

The responsibility for speaking.
The responsibility for listening and obeying.

V. DISTINGUISHING FALSE TEACHERS (vs. 20–22).

Prophecies that do not come true.
Weeding out false doctrine.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

The more radical view in Driver's *Deuteronomy*, in the *International Critical Commentary* (Scribners). The conservative-radical view, in Harper's *Deuteronomy* in the *Expositor's Bible* (Funk and Wagnalls). Capital, brief statements of reasons for holding to the traditional view, by Prof. James Robertson, D.D., in *Book by Book* (Isbister), by Taylor in *Moses the Law-Giver*, chap. 24 (Harpers), and by Kingsley in *Gospel of the Pentateuch*, Sermon 15 (Macmillan). An admirable devotional treatment of the lesson in Oosterzee's *Moses* (T. and T. Clark). "The Forms of Divination and Magic in Deut. 18: 10, 11," by W. R. Smith, *Journal of Philology*, vols. 13, 14.

The First Victories. After their experience with the fiery serpents the Israelites continued their march, rounding Edom, and passing up along its eastern borders. After a new census (Num. 26) to organize the nation for conquest, the Israelites met and defeated the tribes occupying the country east of the Jordan (Num. 21: 21–35; Deut. 2, 3). This includes the story of Og, King of Bashan, with his iron bedstead. Two and a half tribes

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9. When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, [1] thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations.

10. There shall not be found among you *any one* with thee any one that maketh his son or his daughter [2] to pass through the fire, [3] or one that useth divination, *or* an observer of one that practiseth times, augury, or an enchanter, or a witch, sorcerer,

[1] Lev. 18: 26; Deut. 12: 29, 30. [2] Lev. 18: 21; Deut. 12: 31. [3] Lev. 19: 26; Isa. 8: 19.

were assigned to this conquered country, but were not to enter upon possession until they had helped their brethren conquer Canaan. As the Israelites were encamped on the plains of Moab, east of the Jordan opposite Jericho, there occurred the significant visits of Balaam, the heathen prophet, and his unwilling prophecies of power and success for the invaders. It was here also that Moses, in the hearing of the people, repeated the law and renewed the covenant in a series of farewell addresses of which this lesson forms a part.

The passage of Deuteronomy from 17: 14 to 18: 22 is one of much importance, because it outlines the three great agencies through which God was to lead his people, — the kings (Deut. 17: 14–20), the priests (Deut. 18: 1–8), and the prophets (Deut. 18: 9–22). The chief exhortation in the last section is to national purity, separation from the sins and horrible defilement of idolatry. That this may be possible, the prophets are promised, and especially the one great Prophet, the Messiah. Purity, therefore, is the next lesson taught the Israelites in their wilderness training school; a lesson imperatively needed as they drew near to Canaan, that country steeped in foul idolatries.

The Scene. "The speaker is an aged man, whose venerable head is covered with the snowy white of nearly sixscore years, but whose voice is still both loud and clear enough to make itself heard far off. The audience is a people now redeemed: rulers, heads, and members of families, in thousands and ten thousands, crowd around the spot from which the prophet of the Lord addresses them. The sanctuary where they are assembled is creation's mighty temple, bounded on the one side by the wilderness which they quitted only recently, and on the other by the stream which they were soon to cross. And the address itself is nothing less than the last lessons, reminders of past events, exhortations, and promises, uttered by lips which, ere a few months shall have passed, will be silent in the dust." — *Oosterzee.*

I. **Separation from Idols.** — Vs. 9–11. **9. When thou art come into the land** of Canaan. The Israelites were about to take a step for which God through Moses had been preparing them for forty years. What more natural and suitable than these closing exhortations, the baccalaureate sermon of their great commencement week? **Which the Lord thy God giveth thee**, and therefore they could confidently march up against the land. **Thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations.** Sometimes conquered countries conquer their conquerors, as Rome did, and Moses knew how easily his people, after winning Canaan, might fall into a second captivity under the crafty attractions of heathen idolatry.

A NATIONAL TEMPTATION. Moses' warning was confirmed by the entire course of Hebrew history. The Israelites were attracted to idolatry because (1) it was popular, the great nations around them being idolatrous; (2) it seemed politic, because these great nations were constantly pressing against them; (3) it offered to their lower natures the most alluring of vices under the guise of religion; (4) it put a material, easily comprehended image in place of a spiritual God, to be seen only by the eye of faith. Moses understood his people.

10. There shall not be found among you. The following list of nine types of sorcerers is the most complete of the Pentateuch. **Any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire.** This was part of the worship of the Phœnician god, Molech (Lev. 18: 21; 20: 2–5), "an image of brass, with head of ox and members of human body; the arms were heated, and children placed in their embrace." — *Gray.* The nation was often guilty of this sin in later times (2 Kings 17: 17; 2 Chron. 33: 6; Ezek. 23: 37). It is not known whether the rite involved consecration by fire, the burning of human victims, or an ordeal by fire. Gehenna, the valley to the south of Jerusalem, gained its horrible renown from these fearful ceremonies. **Or that useth divination.** "The term means to obtain an oracle from a god by some method of drawing lots." — *Driver.* Sometimes headless arrows, on the shafts of which were written various possible events, were shaken in a quiver, and the one that fell out first was held to indicate the future. (See Ezek. 21: 21–23.) **Or an observer of times.** "The etymology is obscure,

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11. [1] Or a charmer, or a consulter with a familiar [spirits, spirit,] or a wizard, or a [2] necromancer.

[1] Lev. 20: 27. [2] 1 Sam. 28: 7.

and the precise kind of divination intended is uncertain," says Driver, who translates it simply "a soothsayer." **Or an enchanter.** "One that observeth omens, of which the most familiar example is divination by the flight of birds." — *Driver*. Prophesying "from signs that consist in words, or actions, or the cries of birds, or fire, or atmospheric changes, or rain." — *Smith*. The contemplated action was to be fortunate or not, according to the direction in which a toad hopped across the path, or the fancied significance of the next chance word overheard! **Or a witch** (R. V. "sorcerer"). Probably those that use drugs, herbs, or spells for the producing of magical effects, as witches were supposed to bring about the death of their victims by melting wax images of them.

LIBRARY. D. G. Rossetti's poem, "Sister Helen." Longfellow's tragedy, "Giles Corey of the Salem Farms."

11. **Or a charmer.** "One who fascinates noxious animals, like Eastern serpent-charmers." — *Wolfendale*. "The expression may signify 'one who ties' magic 'knots,' or binds by a spell." — *Driver*. **Or a consulter with familiar spirits.** Lev. 20: 27 decrees death by stoning for this form of impostors. Isa. 29: 4 indicates that their trick was a form of ventriloquism. **Or a wizard.** One who makes pretensions of strange knowledge. Driver considers this noun to be the object of the preceding verb, translating both phrases: "One that consulteth a ghost or a familiar spirit," the first professing to call up any ghost, but the latter consulting only the particular spirit which is their "familiar." See Socrates' account of his "familiar spirit" in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* and Plato's *Crito*. **Or a necromancer.** "One who interrogates the dead." — *Wolfendale*. "Probably a comprehensive term, intended to bring within the terms of the prohibition whatever other forms of the same superstition, not already mentioned, were in vogue: for instance, the practice of 'incubation,' or passing the night in tombs (Isa. 65: 4), or the establishment, at particular spots, of oracles of the dead." — *Driver*.

MODERN ILLUSTRATIONS. The natives of New Guinea believe that angry spirits alone cause sickness and death. These spirits speak through the sorcerers. At every feast they set aside food for the spirits. So many evils spring from sorcery that the English government has now affixed severe penalties to the practice of it. (See *Pioneering in New Guinea*, by James Chambers, recently martyred there. Revell.)

The Matabele in South Africa are dominated by their witch-doctors, who readily enter all sorts of vile plots, since their unsupported accusation will cause any man's death. The chief is supposed to bring rain with his medicines. The superstitions of the people clothe all natural objects with terror. (See Carnegie's *Among the Matabele*. Revell.)

The "geomancy" of the Chinese "wind-and-water doctors" is one of earth's most gigantic delusions. It is the superstition requiring graves to be luckily placed, on pain of woe to the living. An intricate system regulates this, and the "doctors" who expound it play mercilessly on the fears of the poor people, extorting large sums from them. (See Beach's *Dawn on the Hills of T'ang*. Student Volunteer Movement.)

"All the religion of many of the women of India consists in walking around the tulasi plant, in saying prayers to it, or in placing offerings before it." Water worship, including baths in horribly filthy "sacred" bathing places; the worship of animals, even fleas being thought capable of enclosing the soul of some sage or saint; the worship of tools, of ancestors, of living men, of gods "to the number of 330,000,000" — these are some of the features of Hindu superstition. (See Beach's *The Cross in the Land of the Trident*. Revell.)

These illustrations from mission fields might be multiplied indefinitely; but how about Christian lands? The ancient Molech burned the body, but the soul itself is burned by our modern Molechs, — the saloon, empty fashion, mammon, and worldly ambition, — into which many parents throw their children.

The wise Mosaic law against consulting familiar spirits is violated to an amazing extent to-day, and our cities are filled with fortune-tellers, clairvoyants, astrologers, palmists, mediums, — feeders of superstition and crime.

Finally, there are hundreds of popular superstitions, such as those connected with the moon, the number thirteen, spilling salt, giving knives, charming warts, lucky days, mascots, pocket pieces, Friday, dreams, and the like. To hold that the course of providence is connected in any way with such absurd trifles is to dishonor the God of providence.

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12. For all that do / whosoever doeth these things are / is an abomination unto the LORD: and [1] because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee.

13. Thou shalt be [a] perfect with the LORD thy God.

14. For these nations, which thou shalt [b] possess, hearkened unto observers of times, / hearken unto them that practise augury, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so / to do. / to do.

15. [2] The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet / prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;

[1] Lev. 18: 24, 25; Deut. 9: 4.
[2] V. 18; John 1: 45; Acts 3: 22; 7: 37.

a Or, *upright*, or, *sincere*; Gen. 17: 1.
b Or, *inherit*.

II. **The Weakness of Idolatry.** — Vs. 12–14. **12. For all that do these things,** whether heathen or Hebrew, **are an abomination unto the Lord.** The penalty was death. "In the earlier days of the sacred history there was no enemy so subtle, so insidious, so difficult to meet as magic and soothsaying. Only by actual prohibition, on pain of death, could the case be adequately met; and under these circumstances there is no need for us to apologize for the Old Testament law, 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live' (Ex. 22: 17)." — *Prof. Andrew Harper.*

13. Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God. Yield him pure service, undefiled with idolatry. See Matt. 5: 48.

14. For these nations, which thou shalt possess. The various tribes inhabiting Canaan. **Hearkened** (R. V. "hearken") . . . **unto diviners.** Not merely listen to them, but go after them, live on their plane. **God hath not suffered thee so to do.** Does this mean that they *could* not indulge in the abominations of idolatry? No, for they did. It means that God placed barriers in their way, — his commandments, the exhortations of prophets, the example of men like Moses; but they burst through the barriers to do their evil will.

WHY ALL IDOLATRY IS WEAK. 1. Because God hates it; it is an "abomination" to him, and whatever he hates must in the end perish. No one can be pure from sin unless he comes to hate it as God does.

2. Because idolatry weakens the body, whether it is the sensuous worship of an idol or the worship of mammon, fashion, strong drink, and the gaming table.

3. Because idolatry weakens the intellect. All superstitions destroy the judgment. As the emotions gain control, resolution, prudence, and reason fall behind.

4. Because idolatry destroys the soul, from which man's true strength comes. No nation can be strong without a high ideal; neither can a man.

5. God does not always drive idolaters at once from their Canaans. Mammon-worshipers, debauchees, drunkards, notorious sinners may seem to flourish for a time, but always in the end their kingdom is taken away and given to the pure and obedient.

III. **Guidance in a Pure Religion.** — Vs. 15–18. Idolatry and sorcery testify to a need of the human soul that must be met, the need of some outlook into the future, the need of spiritual guidance, and of a revelation of God's will. In forbidding idolatry and sorcery this need must be supplied, or the nation would be like the house from which the devil had been driven out, swept and garnished for the reception of seven worse devils. Therefore the prophets and the Messiah were promised.

15. The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee. In this verse there is outlined what Oosterzee calls "the grandest hope of all antiquity," the promise of the Messiah. This promise was at first in large, general terms, like the broad foundations of the Great Pyramid of Egypt, but narrowed upward through the centuries, becoming sharper and more definite as it drew near to its glorious apex, Jesus Christ. **A Prophet.** In the King James version this is capitalized, making it refer to Christ alone; but the revision writes it "prophet" here as well as in vs. 20–22. The latter passage evidently speaks of the prophets as a class, showing how false prophets may be distinguished from the true. But the entire prophetic order looked forward to Christ and found in him its culmination; so that, in either view of these verses, they furnish a picture of the Messiah, and a glorious prophecy of his wisdom and power. "For who is so worthy of being called *the* Prophet, in the fullest extent of the word, as he who has fully made known to us the Father's will and counsel for our salvation?" — *Oosterzee.* **From the midst of thee, of thy brethren.** "In contrast to the diviners, who were often of foreign origin (Isa. 2: 6,

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16. According / according to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Hō'reb [1] in the day of the assembly, saying, [2] Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not.

17. And the LORD said unto me, [3] They have well spoken / said that which they have spoken.

[1] Deut. 9: 10. [2] Ex. 20: 19; Heb. 12: 19. [3] Deut. 5: 28.

etc.)." — *Driver*. So Christ was born a despised Nazarene, a carpenter's son, and in a stable; and his apostles were men of the people. **Like unto me.** Both the prophets and Christ were like Moses in showing God to men, being intermediaries between men and God; but this was in very different degrees. As it is expressly declared in Deut. 34: 10, "There hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom God knew face to face." Of no one but Christ could that be said. "As the crown and embodiment of all that the prophets had aspired to be, the Messiah alone completely fulfilled this promise." — *Prof. Andrew Harper*. See Peter's application of this passage to Christ in his sermon in Solomon's Porch (Acts 3: 22, 23), and Stephen's use of it just before his martyrdom (Acts 7: 37), while Christ himself probably had this passage in mind when he said (John 5: 46), "Moses . . . wrote of me," and the people, when they asked of John the Baptist (John 1: 21), "Art thou *that Prophet?*" and later applied the term to Christ (John 6: 14).

"Moses, the meek man of God,
A type of Christ was seen,
Head of faithful Israel stood,
And guide of sinful men.

"Israel he from Egypt led,
But must to Jesus yield;
Jesus, like his brethren made,
His brethren far excelled."
—*John and Charles Wesley.*

MOSES AND CHRIST. They were like, in that (1) each laid down a system of religious law; (2) each wrought great miracles; (3) each represented God to men; (4) each was honored by the miraculously manifested approval and authority of God; (5) each was an intercessor with God for his people; (6) each was rejected and opposed by his people; (7) the life of each ended in apparent failure; (8) each passed from earth in an unusual way. There are many other points of likeness, and the passover and tabernacle are wonderful foregleams of the Saviour.

But they were different, in that "the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1: 17), that is, Moses showed the sterner, Christ the most loving, aspect of God. The Ten Commandments begin with "Thou shalt not," but the Sermon on the Mount begins with "Blessed." Moses' first miracle changed water into blood, Christ's first miracle changed water into wine. Moses represents God as a judge; Christ, as a Father. Moses declared the terrors of sin, but Christ saved from sin. Moses used for sacrifice the blood of beasts, but Christ offered up himself. Moses taught one nation alone, but Christ teaches the world. Moses sinned, but Christ was sinless. In short, Moses was a mere man, though perhaps the greatest, but Christ is God.

LIBRARY. Discussion of this passage by Espin in *The Bible Commentary* (Scribners). J. H. Newman's *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. 7. Poem, "Moses and Christ," by John and Charles Wesley.

Unto him ye shall hearken, while the Canaanites (v. 14) harken to their sorcerers. The Hebrews often rejected their prophets (see Stephen's fearful indictment, Acts 7: 51–53), and finally rejected Christ; but let us never forget that it was Jews that first accepted Christ, wrote the New Testament, organized the church, became its missionaries, and sealed their devotion with their blood.

16. **According to all that thou desiredst,** at Horeb (Sinai), when the people, terrified by the lightnings, the noise of the trumpets, the thundering and smoking mount, cried, "Speak thou with us; but let not God speak with us, lest we die" (Ex. 20: 18–21; also Deut. 5: 23–31). **In the day of the assembly.** A frequently used term, applied to this greatest of all their assemblies (Deut. 9: 10; 10: 4).

PRACTICAL. God has a perfect memory for the prayers of his people, and even for their unworded desires. No mother was ever so eager to anticipate the wants of her babe. If God does not answer our prayers, it is not because he forgets, it is because he loves.

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18. [1] I will raise them up a Prophet prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I [2] will put my words in his mouth; [3] and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

19. [4] And it shall come to pass, that that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it it of him.

[1] V. 15; John 1: 45; Acts 3: 22.
[2] Isa. 51: 16; John 17: 8.
[3] John 4: 25.
[4] Acts 3: 23.

18. And will put my words in his mouth. This, as Prof. Andrew Harper says, "is a provision for religious progress such as had no parallel elsewhere in the world." Moses was not conceived as having given the final word; God had more truth yet to reveal. Other religions have professed to lay down, once for all, a complete body of truth; but the religion of the Hebrews was a growth, a thing of life.

Especially are these words true, however, of Christ, who himself said, "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself" (John 14: 10). He was tempted as we are, but none of the frailties of mortality affected his teachings. When we study them, we are studying the words of God.

All that I shall command him. See Ex. 7: 2; Jer. 1: 7, 17. Therefore the religious mysteries Christ disclosed but left unexplained, — such as the reason why sin is permitted, the precise method of inspiration, the exact nature of the Trinity and mode of the atonement, the reconciliation of foreordination and free will, — we may be sure God does not think it necessary for us to know.

IV. **Punishment for Disobedience.** — V. 19. **Whosoever will not hearken.** A hearer was as necessary as a prophet. Indeed, it is an old puzzle to inquire, "Would there be sound, if there were no ears?" Our responsibility for good listening is as great as the preacher's for good sermons. Moreover, right listening does not stop with hearing, but goes on to doing; "hearken" includes obedience. **I will require it of him.** That is, punish him for his disobedience. See the use of the phrase in Psa. 10: 13.

ILLUSTRATIONS. Obedience is the test of hearing. "'Is the sermon done?' was asked of one who returned from church sooner than usual. 'No, not yet,' was the answer. 'It is preached, but it still remains to be done.'" — *G. S. Bowes.*

Joseph Parker says that "to have been near a great teacher is to have been close to an open gate, the entrance of which would have brought one into a kind of paradise." No one can scorn a wise man's words, still less the words of the Bible, and remain as good as he was before.

It would be an unkind teacher that did not keep strict account of his scholars' infraction of the rules, and an unwise parent that did not remember his child's disobedience. God shows his love for us in his punishments quite as much as in his mercy.

V. **Distinguishing False Teachers.** — Vs. 20–22. If all this was to be done by the prophets, it was of supreme importance to be able to recognize them, and separate them from mere pretenders. Christ himself, when he came, saw that false Christs would arise, and warned his disciples against them (Matt. 24: 5, 11). The test laid down in the remainder of this chapter is the actual occurrence of what has been prophesied. All prophets' utterances were for the immediate present; they were words of illumination lighting up perplexities, words of encouragement, rebuke, exhortation, reminder. But they also had always an element of disclosure, pointing out the future, and this furnished the surest and most reasonable test of their truth. If their predictions proved genuine, they were to be honored as God's prophets; if false, they were to be put to death, since they had blasphemously pretended to speak for Jehovah. There is, of course, the exception noted in Deut. 13: 1–5, where a prophet that calls men to false gods is to be put to death, even if his prophecy chances to hit the truth.

ILLUSTRATIONS. Edersheim cites the conduct of Jeremiah with reference to the false prophet Hananiah (Jer. 28: 1–17) as a good illustration of the way the prophets themselves made use of this test. (See also the story of Micaiah and the false prophets, 1 Kings 22.)

The New Testament test of false teaching is given in 1 John 4: 1–3: "Prove the spirits, whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. . . . Every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God." The acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as the divine Saviour of the world is the fundamental

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test to be applied to all would-be teachers of men. If they have not the insight to see this or the honesty to acknowledge it, they are unfit to lead others.

Now that Christ has given us the test of his perfect revelation, is the Old Testament test, the appeal to the future, still to be applied? Yes, when the doubtful teaching is set forth in avowed allegiance to Christ. Then, if it is not inconsistent with Christ's teachings, we are simply to judge it by its fruits. Does the new teaching give the happiness, power, and wise guidance that it promises? This test, with charity and large-mindedness yet with practical shrewdness, is to be applied to the many innovations in church life, the new societies, novel church methods, and fresh interpretations of the Scripture. If after this trial they have not proved themselves by their fruits, put them away; unless, as is more likely, they have quietly put themselves away without your trouble.

LIBRARY. F. D. Maurice's sermon on "The Test of Prophecy," in *The Patriarchs and Law-Givers of the Old Testament* (Macmillan).

LESSON XI. — September 14.

LOVING AND OBEYING GOD. — Deuteronomy 30: 11–20.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.*** 1 JOHN 5: 3.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Arouse Attention by asking the class how Christ summed up the entire Bible (as it was in his day — see Matt. 22: 35–40). This summary was taken from Deuteronomy, and our lesson is the same teaching in other words.

Divide the Class into two parts, one to name, as the lesson proceeds, all the blessings they can think of that come from faithfulness to God's laws, and the other to name the evil results that spring from unfaithfulness. Make lists of each, dividing each under the two heads, "National" and "Individual."

Close, as Moses did (vs. 19, 20), with an earnest personal appeal to choose life and happiness in preference to misery and spiritual death.

THE SECTION.

Deut. 30, 31; Rom. 10: 1–15.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

The same as the last lesson. Moses, an old man of 120 years, just before his death, delivering his farewell address to the Israelites on the plains of Moab.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

Books on Deuteronomy and Moses previously referred to. *Sermons* by Vaughan, Alford, Kingsley. Sermon 16 in Maurice's *Patriarchs and Law-Givers of the Old Testament.*

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 15, 16; Deut. 6: 4–9.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

Subjects to be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

What things make it easy to obey God's laws?
How we can put God's word in our heart.
The good things that follow obedience to God.
Why obedience to God is compared to death.
How modern nations illustrate this lesson.
The law "in thy mouth."

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: A Lesson in Faithfulness.

I. FAITHFULNESS IS POSSIBLE. THE LAW IN THE HEART (vs. 11–14).

The summary of the law.
An easy commandment.
The law brought nigh in Christ.

II. FAITHFULNESS WILL RECEIVE A RICH REWARD (vs. 15, 16).

Life and good. Death and evil.
Modern illustrations of the prosperity of the good.

III. UNFAITHFULNESS WILL BRING RUIN (vs. 17, 18).

A prophecy of disaster.
How disobedience destroys nations and men.

IV. A SOLEMN APPEAL (vs. 19, 20).

A faithful testimony.
Moses' closing exhortation.

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11. For this commandment which I command thee this day, [1] it is not
hidden from / too hard for
thee, neither is it far off.

[1] Isa. 45: 19.

The Hebrews were near the end of their long schooling in the desert. Moses had almost completed the baccalaureate address of the great commencement week. After the rehearsal of the laws, he closed (Deut. 27) with the command that when the nation reached Canaan the laws should be inscribed in plaster on stone tablets, and with the recital, in a sublime passage (Deut. 28), of the blessings that would attend obedience to the law and the curses that would follow disobedience. Then, as if lingering lovingly with his people, the aged leader added still further words of warning and encouragement, and at length closed with the matchless exhortation to faithfulness that forms our lesson.

I. **Faithfulness is Possible. The Law in the Heart.** — Vs. 11–14. 11. **For.** Why does the lesson begin with *For?* Moses had just prophesied (vs. 1–10) that the Israelites would in the future become so disobedient to God that their enemies would triumph and they themselves be taken into exile. But in their exile they would remember God's commands and turn again to the Lord; he would restore them to their own land again, and they would enter upon a new life of obedience there. "*For*," Moses goes on to say, "this obedience is possible; the commandment is not too hard for you." **This commandment.** Moses was not referring to the vast and complete series of laws he had been rehearsing. Had he intended those, he would have used some such phrase as in v. 10, "His commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law." What the great law-giver insists on as the one essential commandment is the precept laid down in vs. 6, 10, 16, and 20, namely, love to God. "It is the central command of love to God, without which all external obedience is vain, which is the theme of this last great paragraph." — *Andrew Harper*. **Which I command thee this day.** The commandment was God's, though spoken through the lips of Moses. It was as far beyond the powers of Moses to discover the world of divine truth which his writings disclosed to men as to discover, in that age without a telescope, an eighth-magnitude star. **It is not hidden from thee** (R. V. "too hard for thee"). Moses would avoid confusing and discouraging the people with the multiplicity of laws he had laid down, so he condensed them all to one, "Love God." That, he said, is not too hard to remember or too difficult to do.

ILLUSTRATION. The commandment was not too hard, yet it was hard. Christ's yoke is easy, his burden is light, but it is a yoke, a burden. If a trainer in athletics should prescribe exercises that were perfectly easy, there would be no strengthening of the muscles. He gives exercises that are hard, but not too hard, and the young athlete practises them till they become easy.

"Be strong!
We are not here to play, to dream, to drift,
We have hard work to do, and loads to lift.
Shun not the struggle — face it; 'tis God's gift."
— *Maltbie D. Babcock, D.D.*

Neither is it far off. "That is to say, there is no difficulty or mystery about this commandment of love." — *Andrew Harper*. The true religion was not concealed in "heathen oracles shrouded in mystery, signs and wonders



From a Photograph by Wilson.

Dead Sea, looking towards Moab.

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12. [1] It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, (that we may and make us to) hear it, (and that we may) do it?

13. Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, (that we may and make us to) hear it, (and that we may) do it?

14. But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

[1] Rom. 10: 6.

given in the grove of Dodona, the cave of Trophonius, the temple of Delphi, and the oasis of Ammon." — *Wolfendale.*

PRACTICAL. The religious life of many is dead because they think of God as far off, up in the skies, and forget that he is by their side, reading their thoughts, hearing their words, ready to talk with them and help them carry their burdens. "Practise the presence of God!" cried old Jeremy Taylor. Realize the great truth of God's omnipresence, and you will be ashamed to live unworthy lives.

12. It is not in heaven. It is not a spiritual mystery, far above comprehension, and needing some messenger from the heavens to explain it, "and make us to hear it" (R. V.). Many are waiting for just such an experience of religion, one that will sweep them into the kingdom of God by sheer force, through the commanding intellect of some great preacher or the excitement of some marvelous manifestation. But the kingdom cometh not with observation. It comes quietly, as leaven works in the meal.

13. Neither is it beyond the sea. The Mediterranean. In those days, extensive travel was a most important means of obtaining learning. The true religion does not need travelers, to bring it from foreign countries.

14. But the word is very nigh unto thee. "It has been brought so near to thee — viz., by prophets and other teachers, and especially in the discourses of Deuteronomy — that thou canst talk of it familiarly with thy lips (Deut. 6: 7; 11: 19) and meditate upon it in thy heart (Deut. 6: 6; 11: 18)." — *Driver.* "This doctrine of a God nigh to them, a God of the heart, an ever-living Teacher, was the soul of Jewish education, as it was the soul of Jewish history." — *Maurice.* It is the substance of what God was teaching them in his wilderness training school. It is the "kingdom of God within," which Christ preached (Luke 17: 21). It is blessedly different from the conception of distant gods, off on some high Olympus, as heathen religions fancy.

> Closer is the Lord's protection than a near investing wall;
> Closer than a moat around me, closer than a tower tall;
> Closer than a suit of armor, or my flesh and soul can be;
> For against my own assailing his protection keepeth me!"
> — *Amos R. Wells.*

In thy mouth. God's word must be on our lips as well as in our hearts. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth . . . and believe in thy heart . . . thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10: 9). Here and in Romans the spoken confession is named before the faith in the heart, even though faith is fundamental, because the expression of our faith is the visible and conspicuous evidence before the world.

ILLUSTRATION. "The gospel *believed* is a fountain in the heart; the gospel *confessed* is the streams through the mouth." — *Robinson.*

And in thy heart. "In the heart and not in the mouth is cowardice; in the mouth and not in the heart is hypocrisy." — *Robinson.* "The word could not possibly be nigher than 'in thy mouth and in thy heart.' We need not move a muscle to get it. There is no need of either hands or feet." — *C. H. Mackintosh.* Heathen religions are impressed on the worshiper from without, and the assent of his heart and mind is not even asked. Our religion alone appeals to man's soul to testify to its truth. "For an Oriental of the pre-Christian era," says Harper, "such teaching is most marvelous." **That thou mayest do it.** God's law is not impracticable. It *can* be done, and therefore it *must* be done. To know it is not enough.

ILLUSTRATION. A locomotive may run down-hill without any fire in its boiler or smoke issuing from its smoke-stack, but when it meets the up-grades the fire must glow and the smoke-cloud rise or there is no progress. So as to God's commandment, "that thou mayest do it," there is need of faith in the heart and testimony on the tongue.

PAUL'S APPLICATION of this passage to Christianity, as found in Rom. 10: 4–10, is most important. Paul argues: "Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven?

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15. See, [1] I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;

16. In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.

[1] Vs. 1, 19; Deut. 11: 26.

(that is, to bring Christ down:) or, Who shall descend into the abyss? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead.)" Christ has already come from heaven, in the incarnation; he has already come from the abyss, in the resurrection. You need no more revelation, you need only faith in the revelation that has been given, and an open acknowledgment of that revelation. So Paul goes on to quote: "The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart;" or, as he explains, in your heart you have faith in Christ, and in your mouth is a confession of him before men. And with these two things "thou shalt be saved." So plain and so simple is religion, both in the Old Testament and in the New.

II. **Faithfulness will receive a Rich Reward.** — Vs. 15, 16. **15. See, I have set before thee this day.** In the entire series of addresses that make up Deuteronomy, but especially in the blessings and curses of chapter 28. It was a great satisfaction to Moses to know that he had made a complete testimony. Paul at Ephesus had the same satisfaction (Acts 20: 26, 27), and every Christian should have it in his intercourse with the world. **Life and good.** "Life, coupled with the secure possession of the Promised Land, is constantly held out in Deuteronomy as the reward for obedience to God's commandments." — *Driver*. All kinds of good fortune had been definitely promised, — wealth, large families, many cattle, success in war. "Probably nowhere else will the truth of Bacon's famous saying that 'Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament' be more conspicuously seen than here." — *Andrew Harper*. **And death and evil.** Such evils had been predicted as disease, pestilence, the sword, blasting and mildew of crops, locusts, siege, captivity, the scorn of other nations; and all this with the strongest emphasis and solemnity. "I have heard a great man call this sentence the *granite* on which all other spiritual beliefs rest, and so it is." — *A. K. H. Bruce*.

16. In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God. This command is so often dwelt upon that it is the keynote of Deuteronomy (Deut. 6: 5; 10: 12; 11: 1; 19: 9; 30: 6.) Indeed, it is from Deuteronomy (6: 5) that Christ drew his first great commandment (Matt. 22: 35–40), "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." Thus it is shown that in spite of the insistence on material good and material harm as rewards and punishments, Deuteronomy takes the highest spiritual ground, requiring men to serve God, not because he enriches his friends and casts down his foes, though he does, but because they love him.

ILLUSTRATIONS. But Moses *commands* this love. Must not true love be spontaneous and not commanded? Yes; but spontaneous love grows from dutiful love, as the winged butterfly grows from the worm that is fixed upon the earth.

Therefore Moses goes on to command that the Israelites **walk in his ways.** The life of obedience to God does not need costly apparatus, — no automobile, or horse, or bicycle, — simply faithful feet. We need not take a steam car or a steamboat and travel to distant lands, but walk uprightly around our homes and the streets of our native village.

And the Lord thy God shall bless thee. God cannot violate his own nature, and so he cannot bless an unfaithful nation or man. But he is always eager to bless.

MODERN APPLICATIONS. Hall Caine, the famous novelist, said in an address before the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution, "I count him the greatest genius who touches the magnetic and divine chord in humanity which is always waiting to vibrate to the sublime hope of recompense; I count him the greatest man who teaches men that the world is ruled in righteousness. We look around and see wrong-doing victorious, and right-doing in the dust; the evil man growing rich and dying in his bed, the good man becoming poor and dying in the street; and our hearts sink and we say, What is God doing after all in this world of his children? But our days are few, our view is limited, we cannot watch the event long enough to see the end which Providence sees." Men of greatest genius, then, according to this test of Hall Caine's, were the old prophets, who always saw God at work in his world, ultimately triumphant over all folly and sin, and making even the wrath of man to praise him.

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17. But if thine heart turn away, so that and thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them;

18. [1] I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish; and that ye shall not prolong your your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jor'dan to go in to possess it.

19. [2] I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that witness against you this day, that [3] I have set before you thee life and death, the blessing and cursing: the curse: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: thou mayest live, thou and thy seed:

[1] Deut. 4: 26. [2] Deut. 4: 26. [3] V. 15.

When a nation, like France, must confess to diminishing population, or like Spain, to waning influence, it should also look to see what sins it has to confess. The nations that are multiplying and the men that are most prosperous are those that are most faithful to God's laws.

LIBRARY. Emerson's essay on "Compensation." Peloubet's *Suggestive Illustrations on Matthew* (6: 33).

III. **Unfaithfulness will bring Ruin.** — Vs. 17, 18. Moses now turns to the reverse of the picture. It was less pleasant to paint, but he was a faithful teacher. **17. If thine heart turn away.** It is always men's hearts that turn away, never God's. When husband and wife separate, it is often a question which is to blame; but when God's people turn from him, it is always because the church, the bride of Christ, has given its heart to the world. **So that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away.** Sinners are wont to excuse themselves by saying that they were drawn away, but "every man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed" (Jas. 1: 14). If you do not embark on the rapids, you will not be drawn over the cataract. **And worship other gods.** Idolatry became the great temptation of the Hebrews, and the cause of the nation's downfall.

18. Ye shall surely perish. Vs. 17, 18 might be written on the title-page of the Bible, as its motto and a summary of its history. Every time the Hebrews forsook God for idols, vast numbers of them perished, — in battle, pestilence, exile, slavery, — until the greatest of all denials, their denial of Christ, was followed by the most terrible of all disasters, the destruction of Jerusalem. So in our own history, all our national troubles have sprung from sin, — sins of slavery, speculation, worldly ambition. **Ye shall not prolong your days upon the land.** "The first commandment with promise" tells us that obedience to parents will prolong one's days upon the land. So disobedience to our heavenly Parent will shorten the days either of a man or a nation. Wherever religion flourishes, there cleanliness, temperance, and purity lower the death rate and increase the average duration of life, as statistics plainly show.

ILLUSTRATIONS. "Decay and destruction from moral causes are going on before us in countries like Turkey and Morocco, where social righteousness is all but unknown, and private morality is low. A truly modern mind scorns the idea that the fertility of the soil can be affected by immorality. Yet there is the whole of Mesopotamia to show that misgovernment can make a garden into a desert. In Palestine the same thing may be seen. Under Turkish domination the character of the soil has been entirely changed." — *Andrew Harper*. Of course God's best gift is not merely material prosperity, but it is well to know that even this blessing is generally added to the righteous life and withheld from the unrighteous.

IV. **A Solemn Appeal.** — Vs. 19, 20. F. D. Maurice declares that these two verses embody the spirit of the entire book of Deuteronomy.

19. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you. As he spoke these words, Moses could point up to the open sky, with the mysterious cloud floating in it over the tabernacle. He could point downward to the desert sands, over which Jehovah had so tenderly led them. Heaven and earth are full of witnesses to God's goodness, and, if we are disobedient, they are witnesses against us.

ILLUSTRATION. Conan Doyle, in *The Mystery of Cloomber*, represents a British general who has killed a Hindu deemed to be very holy. In punishment for his crime, the Hindu "adepts" hang over his head an invisible bell, which goes ringing wherever he goes, sounding out a clear-toned condemnation. The fantastic story is a good parable of the way the very air and all nature bear witness against a sinner.

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20. That thou mayest to love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest to obey his voice, and that thou mayest to cleave unto him: for he is thy [1] life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to A'bră-hăm, to I'saac, and to Jā'cob, to give them.

[1] Psa. 27: 1; John 11: 25.

Therefore choose life. You *can* choose. It is this power of choice that makes the chief difference between a man and a stick or stone. You *must* choose. Either good or evil, life or death, is yours for eternity. *Life* is the wise choice. Any other choice is the height of folly.

ILLUSTRATIONS. The old fable representing Hercules at the cross roads, Pleasure enticing him one way and Virtue urging him to take the other road. (*Memorabilia of Socrates*, bk. II., chap. 1.)

The Greek allegory, *Cebes' Tablet*, represents life by concentric circles full of evil beings, Deceit, Greed, Flattery, Fortune (a blind woman), False Learning, and the like, through whose wiles the pilgrim must press, by a steep and difficult road, up to the summit where True Learning dwells, with Temperance and Fortitude.

The Pilgrim's Progress has many examples of choices, — Pliable, who turned back from the Slough of Despond; Formalist and Hypocrisy, who tried to go around the hill Difficulty instead of taking the safe way over it; Christian and Hopeful, who strayed into By-Path Meadow and so fell into the hands of Giant Despair.

Lowell's "The Present Crisis": —

> "Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
> In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil side;
> Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offering each the bloom or blight,
> Parts the goats upon the left hand, and the sheep upon the right.
> And the choice goes by forever 'twixt that darkness and that light."

Thou and thy seed. "The five books of Moses are emphatically the history of a family." — *Maurice.* Fathers were to hand down to their children the law, the warnings, and the promises. God was to be as much their God as he had been the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. One of the strongest motives to a faithful life is its blessed influence on all that come after.

20. Love the Lord thy God. Notwithstanding the fact that Deuteronomy has so much to say about material rewards for those that obey God, this passage and many like it prove that the inward, spiritual blessings were uppermost in Moses' mind, after all. The crown of the law is love, in the Old Testament as well as the New. **For he is thy life.** Obedience to God is "the condition of thy life, and of its prolongation in the Promised Land." — *Cook.* "In Him who is the unchangeable and immortal One thou wilt find thy own immortality." — *Maurice.*

LIBRARY. On God as the only source of life, see the inspiring chapter, "Biogenesis," in Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World.*

THE URGENCY OF THE APPEAL. It was an appeal for an immediate decision, "this day" (vs. 15, 19). The Israelites were soon to meet many powerful foes, and their national destiny depended on their choice of God. Equally critical is the position of a young man or woman facing the perils and opportunities of life, and equally urgent is the appeal to them: "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." "Now is the accepted time."

ILLUSTRATION. Those that put off deciding for God are as foolish as Archius, a Grecian magistrate, to whom a messenger brought a letter, saying that it contained serious matters and should be read at once. "Serious matters to-morrow," laughed Archius, putting it aside. The unread letter was written to disclose a plot by which Archius was slain that night.

Nothing can be more solemn than this closing appeal to the congregation; it is in full keeping with the tone and character of the entire book of Deuteronomy — a book marked throughout by the most powerful exhortations that ever fell on mortal ears. — *C. H. Mackintosh.*

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LESSON XII. — September 21.

THE DEATH OF MOSES. — Deuteronomy 34 : 1–12.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***The Lord spake unto Moses face to face.*** — Ex. 33: 11.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Arouse Attention by asking who was the greatest man that ever lived, and by predicting that by the close of the lesson the class will agree it was Moses.

Draw a Map showing the various points visible from Pisgah, the class copying. Extend lines from these points to Pisgah, and write along them brief reasons why Moses looked upon the scene in confident hope for his nation: "God's promises," "His own experience," "The nation's training," "Joshua," etc.

Leave Room on the paper for the map suggested for next week's review.

Close with an estimate of Moses and an exhortation to imitate him.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Place. — Moses died on Nebo, the highest summit of Mount Pisgah, which is the chief mountain of the Abarim range; the mountains of Moab. It stands northeast of the head of the Dead Sea, where it receives the Jordan. The Israelites were encamped on the plain at its base, on the eastern bank of the river, opposite Jericho.

Time. — Moses died during the first week of the twelfth month of the fortieth year of the Exodus, *i. e.*, the latter part of February, B. C. 1451 (common chronology). The first Passover in Canaan was observed on the fourteenth day of the first month of the forty-first year of the Exodus (Josh. 5: 10). Subtract from that the four days spent after crossing the Jordan (Josh. 4: 19), the three days of preparation (Josh. 1: 11; 3: 1–3), and the thirty days of mourning for Moses, and we reach the date assigned for Moses' death.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

Subjects to be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

The Song of Moses.
The Blessing of Moses.
What are our Pisgah visions?
Why Moses was excluded from Canaan.
Balaam and Moses: a contrast.
The greatness of Moses.
Lessons from Moses' death.

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 10–12; Heb. 11: 13, 16; Acts 7: 37.

THE SECTION.

The last three chapters of Deuteronomy, including the song of Moses, the blessing of the tribes, and the account of Moses' death.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: Lessons in Hope.

I. MOSES ON PISGAH. VISIONS OF HOPE (vs. 1–3).
   The comforting vision.
   Balaam's vision.
   Our Pisgah visions.

II. THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF MOSES (vs. 4–6).
   Why Moses could not enter Canaan.
   Moses honored in his death.
   Lessons on death from Mount Pisgah.

III. MOSES THE MAN OF GOD. A SUMMARY (vs. 7, 8, 10–12).
   How we can imitate Moses' greatness.

IV. JOSHUA, THE NEW HOPE OF THE NATION (v. 9).
   Men die, but God's work goes on.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

Commentaries on Deuteronomy. *Chapters* on the death of Moses in all the lives hitherto cited. The closing chapter of Oosterzee's *Moses* gives a fine devotional exposition of this lesson. Matheson's *Moments on the Mount*, p. 58. Edersheim on Moses' sin, in *Wanderings in the Wilderness*. Tristram's *Moab* and *Land of Israel*. Conder's *Heth and Moab*. *Poems:* "Moses seeing the Land," by John Henry Newman; "The Death of Moses," by George Eliot; "The Burial of Moses" by Mrs. Alexander; "Mount Nebo," by Freiligrath; "No Man knoweth his Sepulchre," by Bryant; "The Death of Moses," by Montgomery. George Adam Smith's *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*. Thompson's *The Land and the Book*. "The Identification of Mount Pisgah," in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 1876. "Moses and the Good Land," by Hume Nisbet, in *Sunday Magazine*, 1888.

PICTURES.

Sargent's *Moses*, in the Boston Public Library. Sargent's *Joshua*, in the same

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PRONUNCIATIONS.

Nŭn, Mō'ăb, Nĕ'bō, Pĭs'gäh (Pĭz'gäh), Gĭl'ĕăd (G hard), Năph'tăli, E'phrăĭm, Mănăs'sĕh, Zō'ăr, Bĕth-Pĕ'ŏr, Bā'lăam.

picture. Photograph of Michael Angelo's statue of Moses. *The Last Meeting of Moses and Joshua*, Luca Signorelli (fresco in the Sistine Chapel, Rome).

1. And Mō'ses went up from the plains of Mō'ab [1] unto the mountain of mount Nē'bo, to the top of [a] Pĭs'gah, that is over against Jĕr'ĭ-chō. And the LORD [2] shewed him all the land of Gĭl'e-ăd, [3] unto Dăn;

2. And and all Năph'ta-lī, and the land of E'phră-ĭm, and Ma-năs'seh, and all the land of Jū'dah, [4] unto the utmost hinder sea;

3. And the south, and the South, and the plain Plain of the valley of Jĕr'ĭ-chō, [5] the city of palm trees, unto Zō'ar.

[1] Num. 27: 12; 33: 47; Deut. 32: 49.
[2] Deut. 3: 27.
[3] Gen. 14: 14.
[4] Deut. 11: 24.
[5] Judg. 1: 16; 2 Chron. 28: 15.
a Or, *the hill.*

The wonderful series of discourses which makes up the greater part of Deuteronomy closes with two marvelous poems, the Song of Moses (Deut. 32) and Moses' Blessing of the Nation. "As regards form," says Andrew Harper, "the Song of Moses is among the finest specimens of Hebrew literary art." "It was Moses' swan song." — *Meyer.* "The Song of the Rock." — *Kingsley.* "The Magna Charta of prophecy." — *Eichhorn.* "The most remarkable of all Moses' productions." — *Hamilton.* A song sung in heaven (Rev. 15: 3). In sublime strains the inspired prophet foretells the coming sins of his people, their exile, and their restoration. The Blessing (Deut. 33) is Moses' last words for the several tribes, in which, as the dying Jacob gathered around him his sons for final warnings and encouragements (Gen. 49), so this father of his nation, with his last breath, poured blessing and admonition upon the tribes.

In both of these poems the final note is hope. "Rejoice!" is the close of the Song; "Happy art thou!" is the ending of the Blessing. Hope is also the key-word of Moses' Pisgah vision, and of the appointment of Joshua; and it was indeed suitable that this should be the last lesson of the wilderness training school.

This closing chapter of Deuteronomy must of course have been added to the books of Moses by some late inspired writer.

I. **Moses on Pisgah. Visions of Hope.** — Vs. 1–3. **1. And Moses went up from the plains of Moab.** An expansion of the Jordan valley north of the Dead Sea, about nine miles long and six miles wide. Here the Israelites were encamped. **Unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah.** Nebo (now called Neba) was probably the loftiest summit of Mount Pisgah, which belonged to the range of Abarim (Deut. 32: 49). Rās Siāghah, a spur projecting westward, is 3,586 feet high, and is almost certainly Moses' outlook. Jericho is opposite, west of the Jordan. **And the Lord shewed him.** Not by supernatural means, but the superb panorama described below may be seen by any traveler. **All the land of Gilead.** The description begins with the north and proceeds by the west to the south. Gilead was the hill-country west of the Jordan, from the Dead Sea to the Sea of Galilee, about sixty miles long. **Unto Dan.** "The Dan meant can be only the well-known place of that name, near the foot of Hermon, often mentioned as the extreme north of Canaan." — *Driver.* It would not be visible from Pisgah, but Hermon is.

The Comforting Vision.

2. And all Naphtali. The country north and northwest of the Sea of Galilee, afterwards occupied by the tribe of Naphtali. Its hills, in dim outline, bounded the view to the north. **And the land of Ephraim and Manasseh.** An extensive region, the center of Palestine, stretching from Jordan to Mediterranean. **And all the land of Judah.** Bethlehem is especially conspicuous from this point, says Hume Nisbet. The spires of Jerusalem also stand out distinctly, if a field-glass is used, and even the roads up the Mount of Olives can easily be traced. **Unto the utmost** (margin: *western*) **sea.** The Mediterranean. The high central ground of Palestine intercepts the actual view.

3. And the south. The Negeb, or southern part of Judah. **And the plain of the valley of Jericho.** Literally (Driver), "The Round, (even) the plain of Jericho," the Round being the name given to "the oval basin into which the Jordan valley (the Arabah) expands, just before the Jordan enters the Dead Sea." **The city of palm trees.** Jericho, though its site is now barren, was a lovely spot in ancient times, and especially

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4. And the LORD said unto him, [1] This is the land which I sware unto A'bră-hăm, unto I'saac, and unto Jā'cob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: [2] I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.

[1] Gen. 12: 7. [2] Deut. 3: 27.

renowned for its palm groves. **Unto Zoar.** George Adam Smith (*Geography of the Holy Land*) considers it most likely that this city was situated at the southern end of the Dead Sea.

"The plain, far out extending,
All rich with corn and vines,
And many a white stream, wending
Through rich, green meadows, shines.

"With milk and honey flowing
As far as eye can span,
All in the sunshine glowing
From Beersheba to Dan."
—*Ferdinand Freiligrath.*

THE STORY OF BALAAM (Num. 22, 23, 24) affords a striking contrast here, since Pisgah was one of the heights from which the unwilling heathen seer uttered his favorable prophecies.

LIBRARY. Stanley's *History of the Jewish Church*, vol I., pp. 168–175. Chapters in Kingsley's *Gospel of the Pentateuch* (Macmillan).

OUR PISGAHS. 1. Men often wish that God would set before them a map of their future as plainly detailed as the view Moses saw from Mount Pisgah. But that would be mistaken kindness. Our sorrows would then grieve us for years before they need, and our joys would lose all the delight of surprise.

2. But nevertheless God does set before us Pisgah views as inspiring as those of Moses. They are the promises of the Bible, the examples of happy lives, the certainty of immortality, the assurance of God's presence, the gleaming towers of heaven.

3. They are given us, as this view was given Moses, to comfort us in despondency. They also hold out before us inspiring ideals, and indicate the direction we are to go, if we would win eternal happiness.

II. **The Death and Burial of Moses.** — Vs. 4–6. **4. This is the land,** etc. See Gen. 12: 7; Ex. 33: 1. **But thou shalt not go over thither.** The reason is given in Deut. 32: 51: "Because ye trespassed at the waters of Meribah; because ye sanctified me not." See the story in Num. 20: 1–13. Moses' sin is not plainly stated, but it seems to have consisted in the impatient wrath wherewith he smote the rock when God had told him merely to speak to it, and especially in the haughty petulance with which he spoke, "Hear now, ye rebels; shall *we* bring you forth water out of this rock?" — a saying which fails to recognize Jehovah as the author of the miracle and Lord of the people.

"Moses, the man of meekest heart,
Lost Canaan by self-will,
To show, where grace has done its part,
How sin defiles us still."
—*John Henry Newman.*

WAS THE PUNISHMENT TOO SEVERE? At first thought, it may seem unjust that the great leader should be shut out from Canaan for this one offense, while so many inferior men found entrance, who could not have reached Canaan had it not been for Moses. But (1) defects of character bring their own punishment, however lofty the rest of the character may be. Harper instances the lives of Cromwell and of Savonarola.

Why Moses could not enter Canaan. (2) Moses had been received especially near to God, and sinned against abundant light. (3) Moses became by this punishment a conspicuous and most fruitful warning to all men, teaching them that God must be served with a perfect heart. "If one act of mistrustful anger laid Moses, the friend and servant of God, in a desert grave on the frontiers of the Land, what may it not do for thee?" — *Rev. F. B. Meyer.* (4) Incidentally, the admission into the story of Moses of this blot upon his character is as far as possible from the style of myths, and affords an undeniable evidence of the truth of the narrative. (5) Furthermore, Moses was permitted to install his successor, and to see with his own eyes the goodly land which his people were to possess. "He had made it possible for Joshua to succeed." — *Taylor.* Any great soul cares little for the personal enjoyment of the results of his toil. He is satisfied if the results come. (6) The death of Moses and God's triumphs through Joshua

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5. [1] So Mō'ses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Mō'ab, according to the word of the LORD.

6. And he buried him in [a] the valley in the land of Mō'ab over against Bĕth-pē'or: but [2] no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.

7. [3] And Mō'ses [was] an hundred and twenty years old when he died: [4] his eye was not dim, nor his [a] natural force [b] abated.

8. And the children of Is'ra-el wept for Mō'ses in the plains of Mō'ab [b] thirty days: so the days of weeping [and] mourning for Mō'ses were ended.

[1] Deut. 32: 50; Josh. 1: 1, 2.
[2] Jude 9.
[3] Deut. 31: 2.
[4] Gen. 27: 1; Josh. 14: 10.
[5] Gen. 50: 3; Num. 20: 29.
a Hebrew, *moisture.*
b Hebrew, *fled.*

taught the Israelites "that man is nothing, and God is all in all." — *Kingsley*. It taught them "to rely on him whose gift the Moseses and the Joshuas are." — *Taylor*. (7) Moses *did* "go over thither," since our next glimpse of him is on another mountain, Mount Hermon, one of the heights in the Promised Land seen from Pisgah, beholding that "glory of the Lord" which he so greatly desired to see when in the flesh. "The Transfiguration mountain has for us now taken all sadness from the contemplation of the death on Pisgah." — *Taylor*.

5. **So Moses the servant of the Lord.** Make a list of the many titles Moses deserves, — Conqueror, Lawgiver, Historian, etc. But this title is noblest of all. **Died there in the land of Moab.** "If the story of Moses had been of man's invention, we should have heard how Moses brought the Jews into the land of Canaan, and reigned over them, and died in great glory." — *Charles Kingsley*. **According to the word of the Lord,** and not because his vital powers were exhausted. Literally, "at the mouth of the Lord," which the Jewish commentators fancifully explain, "by a kiss of the Lord."

6. **And he buried him.** And, as old Thomas Fuller quaintly says, "Buried also his grave." **Over against Beth-peor.** Beth-peor was a Moabite town, on a hill sacred to the god Peor, overlooking the Wady Hesbān where the Israelites were encamped (Deut. 3: 29). Between the plateau and the valley "there are some thousand feet of slopes and gullies, where no foot comes, the rock is crumbling, and utter silence reigns, save for the west wind moaning through the thistles. Here Moses was laid. Who would wish to know the exact spot? The whole region is a sepulcher." — *George Adam Smith*. **But no man knoweth of his sepulchre.** Why was the grave hidden? (1) Because it might have become the object of superstitious idolatry. It is well, for this reason, that the grave of Christ is unknown. (2) Moses, some think, was speedily taken to heaven in the same way as Enoch and Elijah. (See Jude 9 and Matt. 17: 1–8.)

"Of Moses none the place of burial knows.
Upon the mountain, nearer to the sky,
For which his soul was pluming, doth he lie, —
A Mecca for the pilgrimage of snows."
— *John B. Tabb.*

"And had he not high honor?
The hillside for a pall,
To lie in state, while angels wait,
With stars for tapers tall;
And the dark rock-pines, like tossing plumes
Over his bier to wave,
And God's own hand in that lonely land
To lay him in the grave."
— *Cecil Frances Alexander.*

LESSONS FROM THE DEATH OF MOSES. 1. It was lonely, but God was with him, just as he will be with us when we go alone through the dark valley.

2. It was untimely, because of his sin.

3. Nevertheless it was glorious, attended by Pisgah views, conscious of a successful life, honored by divine burial. "Such a life as Moses lived must precede such a death as Moses died." — *Taylor*.

III. **Moses, the Man of God. A Summary.** — Vs. 7, 8, 10–12. 7. **And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died.** His father, Amram, had died at the age of 137 (Ex. 6: 20). **His eye was not dim.** "A fact the more remarkable when we reflect how much that organ must have suffered in a desert life of forty years at least, through constant blazing of the sun upon the crystal sand." — *Oosterzee*. **Nor his natural force abated.** Driver translates it, "Neither had his freshness fled."

8. **And the children of Israel wept for Moses . . . thirty days.** "Seven days, the

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9. And Jŏsh′u-a the son of Nŭn was full of the [1] spirit of wisdom; for [2] Mō′ses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Is′ra-el hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Mō′ses.

10. And there [3] hath not arisen arose not a prophet since in Is′ra-el like unto Mō′ses, [4] whom the LORD knew face to face;

11. In in all [5] the signs and the wonders, which the LORD sent him to do in the land of E′gypt, to Phā′raōh, and to all his servants, and to all his land;

12. And and in all that the mighty hand, and in all the great terror, which Mō′ses shewed wrought in the sight of all Is′ra-el.

[1] Isa. 11: 2.
[2] Num. 27: 18, 23.
[3] Deut. 18: 15.
[4] Ex. 33: 11; Num. 12: 6, 8; Deut. 5: 4.
[5] Deut. 4: 34.

usual time of mourning, was extended for great or official persons." — *Biblical Museum.* So for Aaron (Num. 20: 29).

We leave v. 9 to be considered at the close.

10. And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses. There was no need. God never repeats his great men, because all that is noblest in them still lives on. **Whom the Lord knew face to face.** With whom he held familiar conversation.

ILLUSTRATION. John S. Sargent, in his great painting of the Hebrew prophets in the Boston Public Library, represents the other prophets as men of ordinary fashion, but shows Moses, in the center of the group, as a weird, unearthly figure, in half relief, wrapped around with mystic symbols, wings and flames.

How we can imitate Moses.

11. In all the signs and wonders. Miracles, such as Moses wrought, were seldom needed in conquering Canaan, and so were seldom vouchsafed. **Which the Lord sent him to do.** This is the *first element* in the greatness of Moses, as laid down in these two noble closing verses of the Pentateuch, — he was a god-sent man, as each of us may be.

12. And in all that mighty hand. This is the *second element* in Moses' greatness, — his power. It sprang from his obedience to God's laws, and in this also we may successfully imitate him. **Which Moses shewed in the sight of all Israel.** The *third element* in Moses' greatness was his conspicuousness. We cannot imitate him here, for God gave him unexampled opportunities to influence men. Yet even the humblest life is lived in full view of God, the angels, and "the great majority."

THE PRE-EMINENT GREATNESS OF MOSES. One name alone among the sons of men rivals that of Moses, — the name of Paul; and probably most Christians, remembering when and under what circumstances Moses lived, would consider him the greater of the two.

1. As a religious teacher, Moses was the first to see and clearly proclaim the true nature of God and his relation to mankind.

2. As a prophet, Moses established the great system of sacrificial worship which prepared men's minds for the wonderful truth of Christ's atonement.

3. As a lawgiver, Moses laid down a marvelous code of laws, just to all, merciful, enlightened, inspiring.

4. As a statesman, Moses transformed a throng of slaves, weak, disordered, turbulent, into a well compacted, strong, self-reliant nation. As the carpenter says in George Eliot's *Adam Bede*, "I like to read about Moses. He carried a hard business well through."

5. As a general, Moses delivered his people from the most powerful nation on earth, maintained them amid the perils of the desert for forty years, and led them in confidence against a country settled by fierce tribes, which they conquered. History records no similar accomplishment.

6. As a writer, Moses founded the literature of the Hebrews, which has become the most influential literature of the world.

7. As a man, Moses exhibited a most exalted personal character, — courageous yet patient and meek, resourceful, trustful, true to the loftiest ideals, deeply reverent, thoroughly human, yet most majestic and awe-inspiring.

These seven rays make up the spectrum of a sublime life. What lesson shall we draw from it? The lesson of hope. "From Moses you should learn to despair of no excel-

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lence." — *Hamilton.* Naturally impetuous, he trained himself till patient self-control became his leading characteristic. Nearness to God, the source of his matchless power, you also may attain. If Moses in a desert, with slaves for tools, could accomplish so much, more than three thousand years ago, how nobly should we live in the full light of this twentieth century!

IV. **Joshua, the New Hope of the Nation.** — V. 9. **And Joshua the son of Nun.** A distinguished warrior, forty years younger than Moses; conqueror of the Amalekites at Rephidim, and one of the two courageous spies. **Was full of the spirit of wisdom.** Practical, executive ability is meant. Compare the same phrase used of the garment-makers in Ex. 28: 3. No man is indispensable. "God fulfils himself in many ways," sung Tennyson. Moses dies, but wisdom does not die with him. God has Joshuas always in reserve.

Men die, but their Work Goes On.

ILLUSTRATIONS. Eleazar took up Aaron's work; Samuel took up Eli's; Elisha took up Elijah's; Stephen died, but Saul became Paul.

Inscription on the Wesley memorial in Westminster Abbey: "God buries the worker, but carries on the work."

In preaching the sermon of Jabez Bunting, a distinguished English Wesleyan, the minister said, "When Jabez Bunting died, the sun of Methodism set." "Glory be to God, that's a lie!" shouted a man in the audience, with more truth than politeness.

Said Garfield, in a famous address made to quiet the people of New York on reception of the news of Lincoln's assassination, "God reigns, and the government at Washington still lives."

For Moses had laid his hands upon him. "In token of imparting his spirit to him." — *Biblical Museum.* See the account of the ceremony in Num. 27: 18–23. **The children of Israel hearkened unto him.** They obeyed him, and did not vex him with the mutinies that had so troubled Moses. **And did as the Lord commanded Moses.** And so, nothwithstanding the introduction of Joshua, it goes back to Moses, and back of him to the Lord. All who are servants of God, as Moses was, set in motion waves of influence which will forever be traceable to their obedient lives.

LESSON XIII. — September 28.

REVIEW.

Read Deuteronomy 8: 1–20, and the Lessons for the Quarter.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***Thou shalt remember the Lord thy God.*** — DEUT. 8: 18.

SUBJECT: LESSONS TAUGHT THE ISRAELITES IN GOD'S WILDERNESS TRAINING SCHOOL.

The review may be taught in several ways, each bringing out a new phase of the quarter's teachings. The most important view to take is that for which preparation has been made throughout the quarter, the comparison of the wilderness to a training school, in which God was teaching the chosen people. We may call it

THE NATIONAL REVIEW.

See the Preview, in the Introduction to the quarter, for a schedule of the lessons taught. A brisk method of reviewing these lessons is the following. Fasten twelve hooks in a board, and prepare twelve cards to hang on them, each card bearing the title of one of the quarter's lessons, not numbered. The first exercise is for the class to place these in the proper order on the hooks, thus reviewing the course of events. The second exercise is for the class to name the teaching of each lesson, the teacher discussing the development of the national character. The third exercise is a "quiz" — "Which event studied this quarter teaches faith?" and so on. The fourth exercise reverses this, the questions running: "What lesson was taught by the expedition of the spies?" etc.

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The object of this review is to exhibit the divine plan in God's leading of the Israelites, showing how strength upon strength was added to them in the course of his wonderful providences. Draw the practical lesson that in just as marvelous ways our Father is still leading the nations and the men that trust in him.

While this is the main review, if there is time it will be very profitable to pursue also one or more of the following lines of thought.

THE PERSONAL REVIEW.

This deals with the unequaled character of Moses, and the entire course of his life should be reviewed. The teacher will need a blackboard, or a large board covered with paper, on which he can write in view of the class. Ask the class to name the various characteristics of Moses' life, and to give illustrations of each point. When this has been done, something like the following outline will have been constructed.

LIFE OF MOSES.

Length, 120 years.

History given at all fully, three and one half years.

(Compare life of Christ.)

Born in Egypt. Tribe of Levi.

Father, Amram. *Mother*, Jochebed. *Brother*, Aaron. *Sister*, Miriam.

Outline of life: forty years at Pharaoh's court, forty years a shepherd in Midian, forty years the leader of the Exodus.

Providential and Supernatural Elements: the discovery by the princess; education at court; strengthening of body and mind in Midian; the burning bush; miracles in Egypt; the passage of the Red Sea; the manna, etc.

Personal Characteristics: a strong body and vigorous old age; meekness, shown at the burning bush, at Miriam's revolt, etc.; boldness, shown before Pharaoh, at the time of the golden calf, etc.; faith, shown in the miracles of Egypt, the manna, victory at Rephidim, brazen serpent, etc.; sin, at Meribah.

Achievements: as a *general*, in the Exodus, battles with Amalekites, Canaanites, Amonites; as *statesman*, in organizing the nation, and in the Mosaic system of laws; as *prophet*, in the close communion with God, the tabernacle symbols, the brazen serpent, the prophecy of the Prophet like Moses; as *orator*, in the addresses on Sinai, at Kadesh, and in Deuteronomy; as *author*, in the Pentateuch and the ninetieth psalm.

THE MAP REVIEW.

You may utilize the maps drawn in connection with the last lesson, continuing Mount Nebo as the center, and imagining that Moses not only looked forward from that point, but backward over the entire course of his life. First, let the class name, in any order they please, the places connected with Moses: Mt. Sinai, Mt. Hor, Mt. Nebo, Kadesh, Rephidim, Meribah, etc. As each place is named, let it be marked on the map.

Next take up the important events, from the birth of Moses; number them as you go on, and print the numbers in the proper places on the map. Finally, review by asking questions at random: "What event took place at No. 6? No. 18? No. 10?"

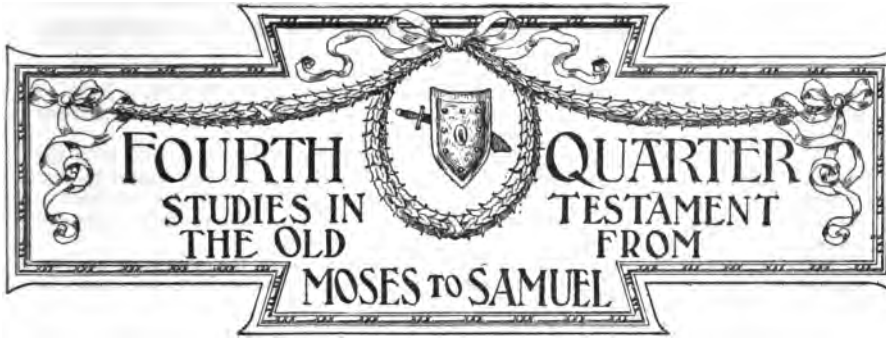
A REVIEW BY SLIPS.

The events of the quarter's lessons may be reviewed very briskly and effectively in the following way. Write upon slips of paper brief titles of all the events, including the principal happenings not included directly in our lessons, such as the story of Balaam, the revolt of Korah, and Moses' sin at Meribah.

These slips are not to be numbered, and the class will draw them at random, afterward attempting to arrange them in exact chronological order. The teacher will ask, "Who has the first event?" and the scholar that thinks he has it will read his slip, the class passing on the correctness of each reply.

If there is time after this exercise, mix up the slips and have them drawn again. This time the holder of each slip will be obliged to submit to a catechizing, regarding the event named on it, from all the other members of the class. The teacher will keep a record of the number of questions answered correctly and incorrectly, and announce at the end who did the best.

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FROM OCTOBER 5 TO DECEMBER 28.

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

ITS NAME. The book is so named because it records chiefly the history of Israel during the twenty-five or thirty years of the leadership of Joshua, the successor of Moses.

ITS PLACE. This book naturally follows the last chapter of the book of Deuteronomy, both as to the history and as to literary form. It describes what must have taken place, — the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan. Professor Moulton says, "If the deliverance from Egypt was the birth of the nation, the entrance into the Promised Land constitutes its coming of age."

The Hebrew canon separates Joshua from the Pentateuch, "The five books," or Fivefold Book, which comprises the Torah, the Law; and places it at the head of what they called the former prophets, that is, the historical books from Joshua to Kings, written by prophets or with a prophetical purpose. From this standpoint the division is natural and perfect.

The higher critics from an entirely different point of view, that of the composite history running through the previous books, and continuing in this, and the close connection of the history with that of Moses as the completion of his work, join Joshua to the first five books and call the whole series the Hexateuch, or six-fold book; which arrangement is a natural one according to that classification.

COMPOSITION. From a literary point of view the story is well told, harmonious, and, so far as composed of different documents, is so well arranged and connected that even when read in the polychrome edition the story flows on for the most part in a single current, with here and there hints of different documents, comments by a later editor, or one of his notes, which in a modern book would be placed at the bottom of the page in different type, but is here incorporated into the text itself.

Part I. — Chaps. 1–12. The conquest of Canaan. — Historical.

Part II. — Chaps. 13–22. Division of the land. — Geographical.

Part III. — Chaps. 23–24. Appendix, with Joshua's farewell addresses.

Others make the division between chapters 21 and 22.

On the other hand, it is quite possible, even in the English translation, to note places where the writer may have used different documents in compositing or editing the book. The higher critics seem to find in Joshua all the documents they have found in the Pentateuch. The two main documents are the Judaic (about 850 B. C.) and the Ephraimite (about 750 B. C.) with several combinations and editorial additions. The Polychrome Bible uses eight colors to distinguish these. Books will be referred to below which give the theory and the details for all who have time and interest to enter upon these problems.

THE DATE. Note that the date of the events is a different thing from the date of writing. It is entirely probable that, as the art of writing was well known before the time of Joshua, records were kept at the time of the events. It is also quite probable that as the language changed and the circumstances, the history may have been rewritten, and edited more than once, exactly as our histories are rewritten from time to time, and the language modernized. We are continually doing it with our Bibles, with Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, etc. It is therefore probable that the early written sources were much earlier

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than those given above. But it is very difficult to decide how late the last editings may have been.

The date of the events, according to Archbishop Ussher's computation given in the margins of our Bibles, was from B. C. 1451, exactly forty years after the Exodus, to 1420 or 1425. It is understood that these figures are not a part of the Bible, but calculations made from what was thought to be the meaning of its facts.

The date of entering Canaan given now by many Biblical scholars, derived from the succession of the Egyptian dynasties, is about 1250. But this date is very uncertain, and is disputed. All that dates can do for us in teaching these lessons is to give us a view of the order of events, and the contemporary history which often throws light upon this history.

SOME SUGGESTIONS. 1. It is impossible not to take notice of the discussions and the work of the higher criticism. It is in the air. It is referred to everywhere, and cannot be ignored.

2. These discussions cannot be carried to any extent into an ordinary Sunday-school class. The emphasis in teaching should be on the great truths. Nine-tenths of the Bible is unaffected as to its teaching by the higher criticism. At the same time these discussions have awakened new interest in Bible study, and called attention to portions that were being neglected, and made some things much clearer and more beautiful.

3. The questions at issue are not settled. The discussion is not concluded. For most of us it is better to wait for further light. It is true that critics of a certain school, dominated by certain theories, have come with considerable unanimity to some definite conclusions. But the end is not yet. The scientific method is right; but from the history of science in the past in all departments we learn that while certain things become finally settled as the result of its investigations, yet the results in most things are continually changing, new light comes from unexpected quarters, arguments thought to be sound are superseded by better and truer ones. In all probability it will be so in regard to the modern criticism of the Bible. Much has been gained by the work of the higher critics.

I believe in the scientific method, in all ascertained facts, in the evolution and development of the Israelite nation, and of their religion as accepted by them, distinguishing between the divine truth and ideal, and the discipline of the nation towards that ideal. But I also believe that many of the inferences from the facts are very uncertain; that contradictions are oftener made by the critics not by the book; that a fair treatment eliminates most of them; that the dominating theory which leads to these inferences will be changed; that there are better and truer theories; that there are other facts which have been largely neglected, but which will lead to different and better conclusions; that in place of the temple built partly on rock and partly on shifting sands by the present popular critical school (reverent and religious as much of it is), and filled with a dim religious light of divine inspiration, — there will arise a temple far more beautiful, founded on solid rock, and shining with a fuller inspiration and a clearer divine light from heaven than even the most reverent of the present higher critical school permit us to see.

4. Let us not be disturbed. Discussion is education. What seems tearing down may be like the taking off the plaster from some of the rooms in ancient churches, — not a destruction, but a bringing to light of paintings hidden for centuries. Good has always come from every great period of discussion concerning the Bible.

REFERENCE BOOKS.

COMMENTARIES. *The International Critical Commentary* on Joshua, by Prof. Geo. Adam Smith; *Judges*, by Prof. George F. Moore ($3.00, Scribners); *Cambridge Bible; Expositor's Bible; Pulpit Bible; Commentaries* by Bush, Jacobus, Keil, Lange; *Handbooks for Bible Classes, Joshua.*

FROM THE HIGHER CRITICAL STANDPOINT. Abbott's *Life and Literature of the Ancient Hebrews* (1901, Houghton & Mifflin); George Adam Smith's *Modern Criticism and the preaching of the Old Testament* (1901, Armstrong); *Polychrome Edition of the Holy Bible*, on Joshua and on Judges (Dodd and Mead); Cornill's *History of the People of Israel;* Day's *The Social Life of the Hebrews* (1901); Professor Driver's *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament;* Hastings' *Bible Dictionary;* Cheyne's *Encyclopedia Biblica.*

IN GENERAL. Professor Price's *Syllabus of Old Testament History;* Professor Sayce's *Patriarchal Palestine;* Prof. Geo. Adam Smith's *Historical Geography of the Holy Land;*

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Trumbull's *Studies in Oriental Social Life;* Professor Moulton's *Modern Reader's Bible*, on Joshua and Judges; *Lex Mosaica* (Eyre and Spottiswoode).

FROM THE PRACTICAL STANDPOINT. Geikie's *Hours with the Bible;* Edersheim's *Bible History;* Stanley's *Jewish Church;* Geikie's *Old Testament Characters;* Tuck's *Revelation by Character;* White's *Bible Characters; Joshua, His Life and Times*, by Rev. William Deane, M.A. (Nisbet, London); *Joshua and the Land of Promise*, by F. B. Meyer, B.A. ($1.00, Revell Co.); *Joshua and His Successors*, by William H. Groser (S. S. Union, London); Thornley Smith's *Joshua and His Times*, chap. 4; Miss Sarah Smiley's *Fulness of Blessing;* F. B. Meyer's *Our Daily Homily*, Genesis to Ruth.

LESSON I. — October 5.

JOSHUA ENCOURAGED. — Joshua 1: 1–11.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***Be strong and of a good courage.*** — JOSH. 1: 9.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

One volume of Professor Moulton's *Modern Reader's Bible* is devoted to "Bible stories of the Old Testament," in the preface to which he says, "There can surely be no question that these classic stories of Biblical literature should have a place in all education, whether of the home, the Sunday school, or the instruction that calls itself secular."

A great educator says that one of the chief qualifications of a good teacher is to be able to tell a story well.

In this quarter there will be an abundant opportunity to exercise this gift, and to present the lessons in a picturesque form which will interest all.

The five degrees of grading are represented as (1) personal stories, (2) heroes, (3) history, (4) ethical and religious, (5) literary. All of them are combined in these lessons, and in the lesson for to-day.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. According to Ussher in the margin of our Bibles, in the spring of B. C. 1451, just forty years after the Exodus; according to many modern scholars, about B. C. 1250. It is impossible, as it is unnecessary, to know the exact date, but we know the order of events.

Place. Near the fords of the Jordan, on the east opposite Jericho.

Circumstances. The forty years' wanderings are ended. The great leader Moses has done his work successfully and died upon the mountains of Nebo. The people are encamped in the valley of the Jordan opposite Jericho, in full sight of their new home.

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 7–9; Psa. 1.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

Subjects to be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

The book of Joshua.
Joshua, his life.
Joshua, his character.
Courage.
Study of God's Word.
The conditions of success.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: A Great Work; the Conditions of Success.

I. THE NEW LEADER (v. 1).

The life of Joshua.
His characteristics.
Joshua as a type of Christ.

II. THE GREAT WORK TO BE PERFORMED (vs. 2–4).

Possess what you conquer.
Applications.

III. THE ENCOURAGEMENTS (vs. 5, 6).

1. Promise of God's presence.
2. Promise of success.
3. The source of courage.

IV. THE CONDITIONS (vs. 7–9).

1. Courage.
2. Study of God's Word.
3. Obedience to God's will.

V. PREPARATIONS FOR THE GREAT WORK (vs. 10, 11).

1. Announcement to the people.
2. Motives presented to them.
3. Investigation of the facts.

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THE SECTION

includes the first two chapters of Joshua with a review of the last chapter of Deuteronomy.

PRONUNCIATIONS.

Am'ŏrites, Ēuphrā'tēs, Găd'ites, Hit'tites, Mănăs'seh, Nŭn, Og, Rā'hăl, Reū'bĕnites, Sī'hŏn, Shittim.

1. NOW it came to pass after the death of Mō'ses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Jŏsh'u-a the son of Nŭn, Mō'ses' [1] minister, saying,

[1] Ex. 24: 13; Deut. 1: 38.

I. **The New Leader. A Character Sketch.** — V. 1. **Now after the death of Moses,** described in Deut. 34. **The LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun,** who by divine authority had been already designated as Moses' successor by Moses himself (Num. 27: 18; Deut. 31: 14–23). A hint of one possible way in which God spoke to him is found in Josh. 5: 13–15. **Moses' minister,** his closest attendant, his prime minister, or, as it were, his private secretary.

HIS NAME, originally Hoshea, the same as the prophet Hosea, signifying "salvation" or "help." To this was added afterwards (Num. 13: 16) "Je" for Jehovah, and the name became Jehoshua, "Jehovah is salvation," shortened to Joshua, later modified in Neh. 8: 17 to Jeshua, from which came its Greek form in the Septuagint, *Jesous*, Jesus.

HIS ANCESTRY. He was an Ephraimite, a descendant of Joseph, through Ephraim, and according to 1 Chron. 7: 22–27, he was the eleventh generation from Joseph. His father's name was Nun, and his grandfather, Elishama, was a captain of the army of the Ephraimites, 40,500 in number, at the organization of the Israelites soon after the Exodus (Num. 2: 18, etc., compared with 1 Chron. 7: 27).

HIS BIRTHPLACE. He must have been born in Goshen in Egypt, where his parents were in slavery.

DATE OF BIRTH. He was about eighty-four at the time he became commander-in-chief. He died at the age of 110 (Judg. 2: 8). And if he was twenty-seven years in Canaan, as the Jews say, he would be 83 at the time of the crossing in B. C. 1451, and therefore 43 at the time of the Exodus, or thirty-seven years younger than Moses. His birth, according to Ussher's chronology, would therefore be about B. C. 1534; or 1334, according to the later chronology.

HIS HISTORY. Brought up in Egypt, under their bondage, he must have known and had part in the great deliverance, — the plagues, the first passover, the crossing of the Red Sea, the desert march, the giving of the Law from Sinai. His first appearance in the Scripture narrative is as a commander of the Israelite forces in a battle with the Amalekites soon after the Exodus (Ex. 17: 8–16), before the arrival of the Israelites at Sinai. He then became an attendant or aide-de-camp to Moses. He was one of the explorers sent out to spy out the land, and, with Caleb, stood up with great courage and faith against public opinion, which was ready to stone them to death.

CHARACTERISTICS. 1. Joshua's most distinguished characteristic was courage, both physical and moral, to which he is so earnestly exhorted in vs. 6, 7, 9.

ILLUSTRATION. In an article in the *Century* for June, 1888, we are warned against misjudging as to courage. Moral courage, not indifference to danger, is the highest form of courage. Two soldiers were charging up a hill with their regiment, in a desperate attempt to capture a battery. "When half-way up, one of them turned to the other, and said, 'Why, you are as pale as a sheet. You look like a ghost. I believe you are afraid.' 'Yes, I am,' was the answer; 'and if you were half as much afraid as I am, you'd have run long ago.'"

One of the bravest officers in the Civil War, who had treated shot and shell with an indifference that had made him a marvel of courage, was in perpetual fear on a steamboat. Often the timid, who dread the smallest things, are far more courageous than those who physically have no thought of fear.

ILLUSTRATION. "The great Admiral Nelson, as courageous an Englishman as ever lived, who attacked a polar bear with a handspike when he was a boy of fourteen, and told his captain, when he was scolded for it, that he did not know what fear was, had a slight form and a weak constitution, and could never have won a boat race. The highest courage which ever animated a human body would not enable the owner of it, if he himself were

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2. [1] Mō'ses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jor'dan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Is'ra-el.

[1] Deut. 34: 5.

untrained, to stand for five minutes against a trained wrestler or boxer. . . . True manliness is as likely to be found in a weak as in a strong body." — *Thomas Hughes.*

The two most distinguished instances recorded of Joshua's courage are the expedition of the spies and its sequel (Num. 13: 16–14: 10); and the crossing of the Jordan described in the next lesson.

2. His faith in God.

3. His deep piety.

4. His trustworthiness as a subordinate.

5. His fine qualities as a general, — keen observation, power to control, wise leadership, celerity of movement, skilful strategy, boldness of attack.

PRACTICAL LESSONS. 1. All his past life was a preparation for the great work to which he was now called. He never could have done the work, he never would have been called to it, had he not been faithful, active, ready to learn, and always doing his best. He that is faithful over a few things will be made ruler over many things. This is the only ladder upward. So it was with David. So it always has been, and always will be. Much evil results from the ambition to have high position and to do great things, without being willing to undergo the necessary discipline and preparation.

2. When the time came, God called him, and opened the door to the great work of his life.

3.

"The world wants *men* — large-hearted, manly men;
Men who shall join its chorus, and prolong
The psalm of labor and the psalm of love.
The age wants *heroes.*"

See the whole poem in *Suggestive Illustrations* on Acts, p. 102.

JOSHUA AS A TYPE OF CHRIST. 1. Their names are the same.

2. Their work was similar, to save the people.

3. Joshua was a conqueror in Canaan, as Christ was conqueror of the world.

4. Joshua succeeded Moses, as Christ with his Gospel succeeded the law.

5. Joshua led the people across the Jordan into the Promised Land.

6. Joshua led the people in the conquest of their enemies.

7. When the war was over, Joshua retired to his own possession in Mount Ephraim, and dwelt there. Jesus ascended on high, and there forever sat down on the right hand of God. — *Condensed from the Cambridge Bible for Schools.*

II. **The Great Work to be Performed.** — Vs. 2–4. **2. Moses my servant,** the one appointed to do my work, **is dead.** Therefore there is a vacancy. A new leader is needed.

"The workers die, but the work goes on."

"Men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever." — *Tennyson.*

ILLUSTRATION. In Westminster Abbey is a marble tablet containing the medallion portraits of the two Wesleys combined together, and underneath is the inscription: —

"*God buries the worker, but carries on the work.*"

Arise, take the place of the dead leader. **Go over this Jordan,** which lay below them at flood-tide, between the Israelites and the Promised Land. See next lesson. This command was a severe test of his faith and courage. **The land which I do give to them,** "*which I am giving to them.* That is, the land of which I have long promised them the inheritance, and of which I am now *in the very act* of putting them in possession." — *Bush.* "The possession of Canaan by the Israelites is constantly set forth as a free gift of the divine favor" (Gen. 12: 7; 13: 15; 17: 8, etc.). "But while the donation of this land was an act of the Lord's free favor to the Israelites, the taking it away from the Canaanites was no less an act of his retributive justice — of such justice as it behooved

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3. [1] Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, (that to you) have I given (unto you, it,) as I (said spake) unto Mō'ses.

4. [2] From the wilderness and this Lĕb'a-non, even unto the great river, the river Eū-phrā'tēs, all the land of the Hĭt'tītes, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your (coast. border.)

5. [3] There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: [4] as I was with Mō'ses, (so so) [5] I will be with thee: [6] I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

[1] Deut. 11: 24; Josh. 14: 9.
[2] Gen. 15: 18; Ex. 23: 31.
[3] Deut. 7: 24.
[4] Ex. 3: 12.
[5] Vs. 9, 17; Deut. 31: 8; Josh. 3: 7.
[6] Deut. 31: 6, 8.

the moral governor of the world to administer against a people laden with iniquity. Gen. 15: 13–16 proves this clearly." — *Kitto.*

3. **Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon.** "That is, every place within the limits specified in the ensuing verse. The expression also intimates the condition upon which the land was to be given to the Israelites: their feet must tread it as conquerors." — *Keil.* "As the old Chinese proverb puts it, 'What will you have? says God. Pay for it, and take it.'" — *E. S. Atwood* in *Monday Club Sermons.* **As I said unto Moses,** Deut. 11: 24, where the words are recorded almost word for word.

4. **From the wilderness.** The desert of Arabia, where the Israelites wandered so long. This was the *southern* boundary. **And this Lebanon.** Called "this" because visible from the region where the Israelites were encamped. Lebanon signifies *white mountain*, from its snow-clad summits. This was the *northern* boundary. **Unto the great river, the river Euphrates.** Their *northeastern* boundary. **All the land of the Hittites.** Descendants of Heth, the second son of Canaan (Gen. 10: 15). They inhabited the country between the Lebanon and the Euphrates. Monumental remains in sculptures and inscriptions have within a few years been discovered in this region, as far south as Hamath, and in Asia Minor. See *The Hittites*, by Professor Sayce; and *The Empire of the Hittites*, by Prof. W. Wright. **Unto the great sea.** The Mediterranean, the *western* boundary of the Israelites. **Shall be your coast,** or borders. These were the boundaries of the land promised to the Israelites, so far as they were willing to take and keep possession. These were practically the boundaries of the kingdom under David and Solomon.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS. 1. The Christian's promised land is God's kingdom both on earth and in heaven, both for himself and for others. It is very large and broad and fertile, a land "flowing with milk and honey," with its "grapes of Eshcol," and every good, satisfying every want, occupying every faculty, rich in every blessing.

2. "Though the promises of God may be slow in fulfilling, yet the accomplishment will come at last; not one jot or tittle shall fail." — *Bush.*

3. We can enjoy only so much of this good land as we conquer and take possession of. Prosperity, the enjoyments of civilization, usefulness, goodness, the higher joys of the spirit, can be possessed only in the same way.

ILLUSTRATIONS. A man gives his son an education, but the son receives only so much as he acquires by study. We possess only so much of a book or a library as we make our own by reading and thought. A person may own thousands of books, and acquire possession of none of them.

ILLUSTRATION. Every invention and discovery of our latest civilization — the power of electricity and steam, of printing, of chemistry, of light — were given to man from the beginning. They all lay sleeping in earth and air and sky from the Garden of Eden down the ages, a part of the Promised Land of the race, waiting for man to discover and use. But they have received only so much as they have actually taken possession of. Only what they conquer can they have, and we have but just begun to acquire our inheritance in this world. The same is true of God's spiritual blessings, of the Gospel, of missions, of a holy life, of heaven upon earth.

III. **The Encouragements.** — Vs. 5, 6. THE PROMISE OF GOD'S PRESENCE. **5. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee,** as an enemy in battle, successfully. "The promise made to the whole nation, in Deut. 11: 25, is here made to Joshua as the leader of the nation. It was literally fulfilled; for not once in the lifetime of Joshua did the Israelites suffer a permanent defeat. Thus is it still: God's people, marching

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6. [1] Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them.

7. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest to observe to do according to all the law, [2] which Mō'ses my servant commanded thee: [3] turn not from it to to the right hand, or to to the left, that thou mayest prosper mayest have good success whithersoever thou goest.

[1] Deut. 31: 7. [2] Num. 27: 23; Deut. 31: 7; Josh. 11: 15. [3] Deut. 5: 32.

under the banner of their Captain, are called to fight, but they are not defeated." — *Johnson.* **As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee.** Joshua had the experience of Moses' whole lifetime as an encouragement to his faith. Moses had many a trying time, many a hard duty, many a danger and difficulty; and the God who had brought him safely and successfully through would not **fail nor forsake** the new leader. In every new difficulty before Joshua, — and they were many and great, — he could look back upon a greater one from which God had delivered Moses. But all his strength, as is all ours, was in God. The work was impossible to him without God's presence. With God he could do all things.

THE PROMISE OF SUCCESS. **6. Be strong and of a good courage.** "Be strong and firm, or vigorous. Michaelis remarks that the Hebrew verb 'to be strong' denotes strength of hand and arm to lay hold of and retain anything; while 'to be firm' denotes rather firmness in the knees, and ability to maintain one's position against the attack of foes. The expression occurs with increasing emphasis four times in this chapter." — *Rev. Dr. Steele.* Courage — not so much physical courage as moral courage — is greatly needed in our day to stand by what is right at all costs; to conquer besetting sins; to resist the tides of fashionable wrong; to carry on God's work and uphold God's truth. Courage doubles the power of every effort, of every weapon; inspires the body and the spirit with strength.

The source of courage is —

1. God's promises of help, and of his presence.
2. The assurance that we are doing God's work, that we are on the side of right and truth.
3. The consciousness that we have strength and fitness for the work.
4. The experience of the past. What God has done, he will do again.
5. Perfect obedience, willingness, and desire to do God's will.

Shalt thou divide for an inheritance. That is, you shall conquer the country, and be able to distribute it among the tribes. It was an *inheritance*, because it came to them from God.

IV. **The Conditions, — Courage, Study of the Revealed Will of God, and Obedience.** — Vs. 7–9. COURAGE. **7. Be thou strong and very courageous.** Great strength, firmness of will, patience, and courage would be required to **observe to do according to all the law.** Because the temptations to worldliness and idolatry were very great. The people were but partially trained, and sometimes resisted authority, and rebelled against the restraints of the law. There would be a great pressure to turn from the right, because expedience or policy seemed to demand it. **Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left.** The path of duty is like a direct road to success, and moving from it in either direction leads to disaster and defeat. "Note the terms *right*eousness, *recti*tude, up*right*ness, and, in matters of opinion, *ortho*dox, while the word 'wrong' is etymologically akin to 'wrung,' twisted." — *D. Steele.* Compare Bunyan's Christian going out of the narrow path, and soon finding himself a prisoner in Doubting Castle.

"The rendering of the common version, *to the right hand or to the left*, does not present the exact picture of the original, which is not that of a traveler pursuing steadily a wrong path, either to the right or the left of the proper way, but that of a traveler who dallies and wanders out of the road first on one side and then on another, as he is allured by various novel scenes and objects." — *F. Johnson.* **That thou mayest prosper.** The original word rendered "prosper" may mean *to act wisely;* and then as the result "to prosper," *to have good success.* "*Real prosperity and success* in the affairs of life are the result of a *wise, discreet,* and *prudent course of conduct,* and inseparable from it, and it is vain to look for it from any other source. Those only can reasonably expect the blessing of God upon their temporal affairs who make his word their rule, and conscientiously walk by it in all circumstances; and this is the way of true wisdom." — *Bush.*

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8. [1] This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but [2] thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt [a] have good success.

9. [3] Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; [4] be not afraid, affrighted, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

10. Then Jŏsh'u-a commanded the officers of the people, saying,

11. Pass through the host, midst of the camp, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for [5] within three days ye shall are to pass over this Jor'dan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it.

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[1] Deut. 17: 18, 19.
[2] Psa. 1: 2.
[3] Deut. 31: 7.
[4] Psa. 27: 1; Jer. 1: 8.
[5] Josh. 3: 2; Deut. 9: 1.
a Or, *do wisely*, v. 7.

STUDY OF THE DIVINE LAW. **8. This book of the law.** This has been usually regarded as the five books of the Pentateuch. Modern criticism, however, regards much of the Pentateuch as written later, but there was then a book of the law, the basis of the Pentateuch, containing its essential principles, just as the United States had a written constitution in 1788, however much it has grown since by later enactments. With this Bible Joshua was to do three things: (1) **Shall not depart out of thy mouth.** He must talk about it and teach it. He must make it the theme of his conversation. It must be a familiar book. All his teachings must be Biblical. (2) **Thou shalt meditate therein day and night.** He must study his Bible; let it be continually in his thoughts. No careless reading would do, but earnest, long-continued study, so that he might penetrate into its real and deepest meaning. It must be practically committed to memory, bound "for a sign upon thy hand," and "as frontlets between thine eyes," written "upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates" (Deut. 6: 7–9; comp. Psa. 1: 2).

OBEDIENCE TO THE DIVINE LAW. (3) The third thing Joshua was to do with the law was to obey it. The purpose of the study was to learn his duty. It was to be his rule of life, his chart on the voyage to success, a guide board on his way, a book of instructions.

ILLUSTRATION. "I visited Mr. Prang's chromo establishment in Boston, and saw the process of printing a picture of some public man. The first stone made hardly an impression on the paper. The second stone showed no sign of change. The third, no sign. The fifth and sixth showed only outlines of a man's head. The tenth, the man's face, chin, nose, and forehead appeared. The fifteenth and twentieth looked like a dim picture. The twenty-eighth impression stood forth as natural as life. It looked as though it would speak to you. So, carefully and prayerfully read the Word of God — read the same chapter again and again — and the twenty-eighth time Christ Jesus will shine forth." — *Dwight L. Moody.*

THE RESULT will be, as stated before and here repeated for emphasis, that **thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.**

9. Have not I commanded thee? Emphasize the *I*. He who has authority, and infinite wisdom and power, who is able to carry thee through all difficulties and dangers, and whom thou art bound implicitly to obey. So in the Christian warfare, it is the God of heaven whose battles we fight and in whose service we are engaged. **For the Lord thy God is with thee.** "*Take* hold of the promise, and KEEP that hold. Nothing so demoralizes the forces of the soul as fear. Nothing fosters fear like solitude. Only as we recognize the presence of the Lord, does fear give place to faith. Such simple, childlike faith in God has made more heroic souls upon this earth than the stoic could ever dream." — *Miss Sarah Smiley.*

ILLUSTRATION. Cesar was once being ferried over a dangerous stream in a storm. The rower began to be afraid. "Keep on," said the emperor. "Remember, *Cesarem vehis*" (it is Cesar you are carrying).

V. **Preparations for the Great Work.** — Vs. 10, 11, and the rest of this chapter, and all of Josh. 2.

1. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE PLAN TO THE PEOPLE. **11. Pass through the host.** The officers were detailed to make known the plan, and bid them prepare to start

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within three days. **Pass over this Jordan.** The Jordan was at flood-tide and seemed an impassable barrier. The command was a test of faith, courage, and obedience. To aid them several motives were presented: (1) the possession of the land of promise, the goal of their journeyings, their future home. (2) The assurance that **the LORD your God giveth you to possess it.** (3) The warning that every one who refused should be put to death (v. 18). They would better die gloriously fighting than as cowards and traitors.

2. INVESTIGATION OF THE FACTS (Josh. 2). Two explorers were sent across the river, to investigate and report. Their story is told in Josh. 2. They reported that terror had fallen on all the inhabitants of the land, their courage had melted away, and their hearts were faint; for they had heard what the Lord had done for the Israelites in Egypt, and against their neighbors across the river, Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan. This report, of course, gave courage and faith to Israel.

NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT ON OLD TESTAMENT THEMES. The propriety of using these histories as types and examples (1 Cor. 10: 11). Our Promised Land (Heb. 11: 13–16; Matt. 6: 33; John 1: 12; 3: 16; Rom. 8: 28; 1 Cor. 2: 9; 1 Tim. 4: 8). What keeps men from entering it (Heb. 3: 10, 11). A warning to us (Heb. 4: 1). The duty of studying God's Word (John 17: 17; Acts 17: 11; 2 Tim. 3: 15; 2 Pet. 1: 18, 19).

LESSON II. — October 12.

CROSSING THE JORDAN. — Joshua 3 : 9–17.

Study Josh. 3 : 9–4 : 7.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.*** — ISA. 43: 2.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

This lesson can be presented to children in a series of pictures, a story of adventure, exhibiting God's care and direction, and man's faith, obedience, and worship.

A word-picture of the situation of Canaan at this time, as illustrated in some degree by what the early settlers of this country found here, will help to give reality to the history.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: A Fresh Start in Life. Entering upon our Promised Blessings.

I. THE GENERAL SITUATION.

The position of the Israelites.
Their number.
The attractions of the Promised Land.
Its value as a training school.
Two obstacles in the way.

II. THE MARCHING ORDERS (vs. 9–11).

The order promulgated.
The right of Israel to the land.

III. ON THE MARCH (vs. 12–14).

IV. CROSSING THE JORDAN (vs. 15–17).

The Jordan.
Why cross at this season.
The path through the waters.
Secondary causes.
Safely over.

V. MEMORIALS.

VI. PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 15–17; Heb. 11: 16; 4: 1, 11; Isa. 43: 1, 2.

THE SECTION

includes Josh. 3, 4 and 5: 1–12.

PLACE IN THE HISTORY.

The coming of age of the Israelitish nation. Their entrance upon their home.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

Subjects to be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

The Jordan.
The miracle of the crossing.
Why at this season of the year.
Why the ark was placed in mid-stream.
Right of Israel to Canaan.
Memorials.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

Prof. Geo. Adam Smith's *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, pp. 266–278, and appendix II., pp. 659–662; Prof. Ira M. Price's *Syllabus of Old Testament History*; *The Polychrome Bible*, Haupt.

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HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. Immediately following the last lesson in April, the Easter season. The fortieth anniversary of the Exodus from Egypt.

Place. Near the fords of the Jordan, opposite Jericho.

PRONUNCIATIONS.

Am'ŏrites, Ar'ăbăh, Cā'năanites, Gir'găshites, Hĭt'tites, Hī'vites, Jĕb'ŭsites, Pĕr'ĭzzites, Shĭt'tĭm, Zăr'ĕtăn.

On the extermination of the Canaanites, see Stanley's *Jewish Church*, Lect. 11, pp. 223–228; Mozley's *Lectures on the Old Testament*, Lect. 4; Arnold's *Sermons*, VI: 35–37.

See account of crossing the Danube in Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, Milman's edition, vol. III., p. 321; Professor Blaikie's *Bible History;* Miss Smiley's *Fulness of Blessing;* Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, pp. 282, 283; Thomson's *Land and the Book;* Ritter's *Geography of Palestine;* Macgregor's *Rob Roy on the Jordan.*

I. **The General Situation.** — FIRST. THE POSITION OF ISRAEL. The children of Israel were encamped on a broad fertile plain on the eastern or Moabite side of the Jordan, about one hundred and fifty feet above the usual level of the Jordan, with the mountains of Moab behind them and the flooded river before them, with Jericho six or seven miles distant from the river on the other side. The plain where they were encamped was from five to seven miles wide.

SECOND. THEIR NUMBER. According to the last census (Num. 26: 51) there were 601,730 men from 20 years old and upward, implying a total population of over two million. That the numbers were large is certain from the fears they awakened in the inhabitants, who would not have been so troubled by a small band.

THIRD. THE ATTRACTION OF THE PROMISED LAND. The great depression of this region, more than a thousand feet below the level of the Mediterranean, and shut in by mountains, gave it a tropical climate and exuberant fertility. Gardens were numerous and palm trees flourished. — *G. A. Smith's Historical Geography.* During the winter season "the climate is as lovely as could be desired. The air is soft and mild, and green fields are on every hand. . . . I suppose the Israelites came down from the mountains of Moab to enjoy the winter on the Shittim plain, covered, as it then was, with a rank growth of tropical vegetation. The abundance of fresh water at their command, the grass and flowers, the mild air, must have filled them with delight after their rough experience in the desert." — *Hon. Selah Merrill, LL.D., Consul at Jerusalem.* The people were eagerly looking forward to possessing "a land flowing with milk and honey," "an exceedingly good land." "The records of Rameses II. show the condition of Palestine and the adjacent countries in the age of Moses itself. The Egyptian king brought back from them, he tells us, gold, glass, gums, cattle, slaves, ivory, ebony, boats, horses, chariots inlaid with gold and silver, or painted, iron, steel, dates, oil, wine, asses, cedar, suits of armor, fragrant wood, war galleys, incense, gold dishes with handles, ornaments of lapis lazuli, silver dishes, precious stones, honey, lead, spears of brass, colors, — the plunder, in fact, of a rich and civilized country. The meadows of Palestine, its fortresses, its groves, and its orchards, are mentioned, showing that prosperity of every kind abounded." — *Lepsius* in *Geikie.*

FOURTH. THE VALUE OF THE LAND AS A TRAINING SCHOOL FOR THE NATION. It would have been difficult anywhere to have found a land more perfectly adapted for the purpose of training a nation in the true religion than was Palestine. (1) It was small, so that there could be no little unity with diversity. (2) It was defended and sheltered by the Jordan on the east, and further to the east by a great desert, by mountains on the north, by the Mediterranean on the west, and by deserts on the south. Moreover, it was situated on a highway between the two great nations of the world, neither of which would want the other to possess it. Thus shut in there would be an opportunity to train and discipline the nation, till the great truths it stood for could be wrought indelibly into their nature. (3) Yet there was sufficient intercourse with other nations to keep them in touch with the world, and they were so centrally situated that the true religion could be made known. Compare the advantages of situation in the case of Italy, Greece, England, Spain, and the United States.

FIFTH. TWO OBSTACLES. The first one was the Jordan River, rapid and deep, with overflowing banks, impassable by any large number. The other obstacle was the inhabitants in their walled cities, and some of them seemed to the spies (Num. 13) to be giants in whose presence they seemed like grasshoppers.

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9. And Jŏsh'u-a said unto the children of Is'ra-el, Come hither, and hear the words of the LORD your God.

10. And Jŏsh'u-a said, Hereby ye shall know that [1] the living God is among you, and that he will without fail [2] drive out from before you the Ca'naan-ites, Ca'naan-ite, and the Hit'tites, Hit'tite, and the Hi'vites, Hi'vite, and the Per'iz-zites, Per'iz-zite, and the Gir'ga-shites, Gir'ga-shite, and the Am'or-ites, Am'or-ite, and the Jeb'u-sites. Jeb'u-site.

[1] Deut. 5: 26; 1 Sam. 17: 26; Matt. 16: 16; 1 Thes. 1: 9. [2] Ex. 33: 2; Deut. 7: 1; Psa. 44; 2.

II. **The Marching Orders.** — Vs. 9–11. In the first place the officers notified the people to prepare to cross the Jordan. They were to sanctify themselves (v. 5), set themselves apart for a special divine work, devote themselves anew to God's service, cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh, and of heart and life. 9. **Hear the words of the Lord your God.** Their taking possession of the land was according to the divine will.

THE RIGHT OF ISRAEL TO THIS LAND. What right had the Israelites to drive out and dispossess the inhabitants? (1) "Their destruction is always presented in Scripture as a judgment of God sent on them because of their wickedness. They had not only fallen into total apostasy from God, but into forms of idolatry of the most degrading kind. Their false religion cannot be regarded as a mere error of judgment; cruelty the most atrocious and unnatural crimes the most defiling were part and parcel of its observances (compare Lev. 18: 21, 25 sqq.; Deut. 12: 30 sqq.)." — *Cook.* "The heathenism of Palestine and Syria was so foul and degrading that there is no State, even at this time, which would not put it down, if necessary, by the severest penalties. Its spread to Rome was bewailed fifteen hundred years later by the satirists of the day, as a calamity marking the utter decay of the times (Juvenal, *Satires*, III., 62)." — *Geikie.* Nor did they sin thus through ignorance. They were not a savage race, but among the more cultivated ones of the time. They had commerce, coined money, iron chariots, probably books. (2) The Canaanites had received repeated warnings and instructions. God bore with them with infinite patience. (3) If God had not destroyed them they would have destroyed themselves by their own corruption, but not till they had injured many others by their example and influence. This very destruction was more merciful than would have been the sufferings which would naturally flow from their character and conduct. (4) What the Israelites did was not for themselves alone. "The Israelites' sword in its bloodiest executions wrought a work of mercy for all the countries of the earth to the very end of the world"; on it "the happiness of the human race depended." — *Dr. Arnold.* The inhabitants must be destroyed, or they would destroy the kingdom of God in Israel. If the few who were spared contrary to orders exerted so baleful an influence, what would have been the result if a large body had remained? "If the Jews had failed, the world would have been lost. The true religion would have vanished, the mission of Christ would have been impossible. In these contests, on the fate of one of these nations of Palestine, the happiness of the human race depended." — *Stanley.* The nearest modern example is seen in the contrast between what this country is now in its influence upon the world and what it would have been had the Indians remained the sole inhabitants; and this without condoning a single injustice or cruelty to the native race. They should have been conquered to civilization and religion only by justice and love, as, in fact, was done in many cases. (5) It can make no difference to those who are thus destroyed whether the agent of their destruction be a natural catastrophe, like an earthquake, the flood, the overthrow of Sodom, the destruction of the Egyptians in the Red Sea, or by an army divinely commissioned for the purpose, except that their gradual destruction by the servants of God, through marvelous miracles, was a continual invitation to them to repent, as well as a warning to the world against their sins. The Israelites simply executed a lawful sentence against crime. It is no more cruelty than it is for the appointed officers to execute a criminal in our day. (6) "To employ the Israelites in the execution of the fearful sentence was adapted to inspire them with horror of the crimes thus severely punished, and to prevent their intimacy with the surrounding heathen and the contamination which intimacy would have produced." — *F. Johnson.* Thus it was that this conquest was necessary to the planting in the world and for the world the love and service of the true God and the purest morality and love toward men.

10. **Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you.** Not an idol, not a mere "bright essence increate." Jehovah would prove his existence and his presence by his works. We know him by what he does. By this manifestation of power he would prove to them that he would give them the victory over the dangers and difficulties they

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11. Behold, the ark of the covenant of [1] the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jor'dan.

12. Now therefore [2] take you twelve men out of the tribes of Is'ra-el, out of for every tribe a man.

13. And it shall come to pass, [3] as soon as when the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the LORD, [4] the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jor'dan, that that the waters of Jor'dan shall be cut off, from even the waters that come down from above; and they [5] shall stand upon an in one heap.

[1] V. 13. [2] Josh. 4: 2. [3] Vs. 15, 16. [4] V. 11. [5] Psa. 78: 13; 114: 3.

greatly feared, and that he would **without fail drive out from before** them those who then possessed the land. By what God has done, we know what he can do, and will do. "They greatly needed this proof, for the difficulties of the Hebrews were immense. To the iron chariots, the horses, and the fortresses of the country, and its formidable leagues of chiefs and kings, they could oppose only a rude, half-armed militia, with inadequate military training." — *Geikie.* **The Canaanites** were, strictly speaking, the *lowlanders*, who inhabited the lower tracts of Palestine, on the sea-coast and western bank of the Jordan (Num. 13: 29). But this term is often used in a wider sense, including all the tribes descended from Canaan, including all the tribes here named. **The Hittites** were descended from Heth, the second son of Canaan. They became a great nation on the north of Palestine, but extended in some branches into the land itself. **The Hivites**, descendants of Canaan, were merely, as the name signifies, "villagers," living in the north of Palestine. — *Professor Price.* (Josh. 11: 3; Judg. 3: 3.) **The Perizzites**, *rustics*, or *villagers;* Canaanites who dwelt in open, unwalled towns, to the south and on the western flanks of Mount Carmel. **The Girgashites** were probably a family of the Hivites, dwelling east of the Sea of Galilee. **The Amorites**, *mountaineers*, descendants of the fourth son of Canaan, were the most powerful of the Canaanitish people. They occupied (Gen. 14: 7) the barren heights west of the Dead Sea, and stretched west to Hebron (Gen. 13: 18; 14: 13). **The Jebusites**, a Canaanite tribe, were in possession of the central highlands around Jerusalem, their stronghold.

At the same time, we learn from the monuments lately discovered that probably at this time they had been greatly weakened by Egyptian conquest, and there was some such preparation for the newcomers as there was among the Indians when the Pilgrims came over to New England.

In the time of Rameses III., successor of Merneptah, the Pharaoh of the Exodus, a general race migration swept in upon Syria and Palestine. Rameses conquered them. The Hittites are heard of no more. But the Philistines came in and settled on the Mediterranean shore. The whole country was disturbed and unsettled. See Cornill's *History of Israel*, pp. 44–46. "Our early information agrees with the book of Joshua in representing Palestine as divided up among a number of small city-states, each with its own king." — *Polychrome Bible, note, p. 47.* "This mixed population, in this small bit of territory, overrun and plundered by every crossing army for hundred of years, was the problem which faced the invading Israelites. Separated into small clans, or centered in small cities, some of them well walled and fortified, without any central organization, or any common bond of unity, these people became an easy prey even to such an army as that with which Joshua crossed the Jordan." — *Prof. Ira M. Price* in *The Monuments and the Old Testament.*

11. **Behold, the ark . . . of the Lord of all the earth,** who, therefore, has the right and the power to give them the land. **Passeth over before you,** to lead you, to make the way for you, to prove that it is safe for you to follow, to show that the power and the victory are from God.

III. **On the March.** — Vs. 12–14. 12. **Now therefore take you twelve men,** to bring memorial stones from the river bed, as described later on. **Out of every tribe a man,** so that each tribe should be represented, and each feel a common interest in the event. No one tribe should have an advantage over the others.

13. **And it shall come to pass.** This verse is the promise of what is described in v. 16, as fulfilled.

THE ORDER OF THE PROCESSION. FIRST came the priests bearing the Ark of the

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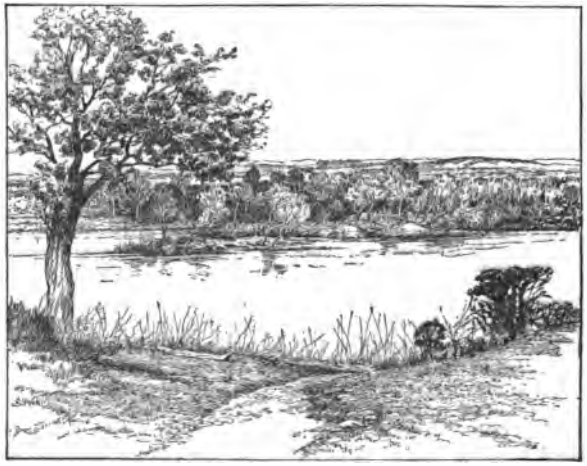
14. And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jor'dan, [and] the priests [bearing that bare] the [1] ark of the covenant [being] before the people;

15. [And as and when] they that bare the ark were come unto Jor'dan, and [2] the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the [brim brink] of the water, (for [3] Jor'dan overfloweth all [his its] banks [4] all the time of harvest,)

[1] Acts 7: 45.
[2] V. 13.
[3] 1 Chron. 12: 15; Jer. 12: 5; 49: 19.
[4] Josh. 4: 18; 5: 10, 12.

Covenant, the symbol of God's presence with them. It is no longer the pillar of cloud and fire, but the ark that now guides them. The teaching of God's presence is less sensuous and physical, and more spiritual (v. 14).

14. When the people removed from their tents, broke up their encampment, taking their tents with them. "The original expression means primarily *to pull up*, and it is used with reference to tent-pins, which are pulled up when a tent is to be moved." — *Johnson*.



From a Photograph by Bonfils.

Fords of the River Jordan, near Jericho.

SECOND. The twelve men accompanied them.

THIRD. Then there was a space of two thousand cubits, about three fourths of a mile, left vacant so that the ark could be seen and followed more easily; and also to show the sacredness of the symbol of God who was to exert such power.

FOURTH. After leaving this space free, the people walked down the slopes of the valley toward the river.

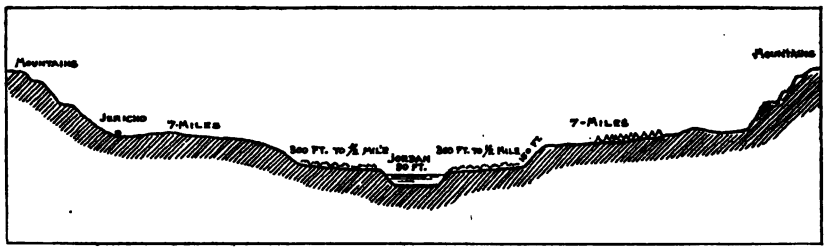
IV. **Crossing the Jordan.** — VS. 15–17. THE JORDAN, *i. e.*, *The Descender*, from the rapidity of its flow, is in the upper part of its course one of the swiftest rivers in the world, the descent being 40 feet to a mile near the Lake of Galilee. The Sacramento in California is said to be more rapid. But from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea there is an average almost uniform descent of about 9 feet to a mile. "It may be interesting to compare with this the average inclination of some of our own English rivers. The swiftest is the Dee, which has a fall of 16.5 feet per mile, from Balmoral to Aberdeen. The Tweed and Clyde have a fall of 16 feet and 14 feet respectively, while the Severn has but 26½ inches, the Thames 18 inches, per mile." But when swollen with the spring floods this rapid descent makes an impassable barrier to all except a few strong swimmers. There were no boats, and even if there were they could not carry the people across. "The swiftness is rendered more dangerous by the muddy bed, and curious zigzag current which will easily sweep a man from the side into the center of the stream." — *G. A. Smith's Historical Geography*. President Bartlett, when traveling in Palestine, found, on the 22d of March, the Jordan "rushing along like a mill-race, and though it had fallen from its greatest height, the proper banks of the channel were invisible, and indicated only by lines of oleanders and other shrubs and trees." — *From Egypt to Palestine, p. 451*. We can understand the situation better by means of a section across the stream. See next page.

15. For Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest, *i. e.*, the barley harvest, which is during the latter part of March and first of April in this warm and

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16. That that the waters which came down from above stood, and and rose up upon an heap very far from the city Ad'am, that *is* beside 1 Zar'e-tan: in one heap, a great way off, at Ad'am, the city that is beside Zar'e-than: and those that came down [2] toward the sea of the plain, *even* 3 the salt sea, failed, *and* were Ar'a-bah, even the Salt Sea, were wholly cut off: and the people passed over right against Jĕr'ĭ-chō.

[1] 1 Kings 4: 12; 7: 46. [2] Deut. 3: 17. [3] Gen. 14: 3; Num. 34: 3.



This cut represents a section of the Jordan valley at the place where the Israelites crossed, taken from the description in Prof. George Adam Smith's *Historical Geography of the Holy Land.*

"Jordan, 90 ft." represents the width of the Jordan in its usual flow.

The 300 ft. on either side represent the wider banks covered with bushes and reeds, which were overflowed in the spring floods, and which were covered with water at the time of the crossing.

On the right bank, 150 feet or more above the flood, the "AAAAAA" represents the place where the Israelites were encamped just before they crossed.

sheltered region. Dr. Thomson says that he has visited this place "early in April, and found the barley harvest around Jericho already ended." The river varies in depth, in its ordinary flow, from 3 feet at the fords to 12 feet in other places. The width is 90 to 100 feet. But in the spring it overflows the first level above the stream, making the stream from 600 feet to a mile in width. This level of Jordan's wider bed is covered with tamarisks and other semi-tropical trees and tangled bush.

WHY THIS SEASON WAS CHOSEN FOR CROSSING. This season of high water was wisely chosen; for (1) the miracle was the more stupendous and impressive to the Israelites. (2) It inspired their enemies with greater terror. They would see in it the marvelous power of God. (3) Those enemies, had the crossing been attempted when the water was low, would have appeared upon the opposite shores to annoy the Israelites. Why, then, did they not dispute it upon the present occasion? The answer is simple. They trusted to the swollen river, which they knew no army could cross. (4) "The crossing in harvest was also providentially ordered with reference to the food of the people; they entered the land when it yielded abundance (see Josh. 5: 11, 12)." — *Rev. Dr. F. Johnson.*

16. The waters . . . rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam. The true meaning is expressed by the R. V., "Rose up in one heap, a great way off, at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan." That is, in some way, by direct miraculous power, or by some means, the waters were dammed up there long enough for the people to pass over the Jordan. **City Adam, that is beside Zaretan.** Probably at the ancient bridge at the Damieh ford, fifteen or twenty miles above the encampment of the Israelites, and just below the place where the Zerka enters into the Jordan. At this place the river is narrow and flows between two ridges of mountains on either side, which here almost meet, which seems the most suitable point for damming up the river. Here, too, there is a sudden break or fault in the geological formation. The valley of the Jordan can be best understood by the accompanying map. "For thirteen miles south of the Lake of Galilee the breadth is hardly more than four miles, then it expands to six or seven in the plain of Bethshan (Beisan). Ten miles south of Bethshan the Samaritan hills press eastward, and for the next thirteen the river runs closely by their feet, and the valley is three miles wide. Again the Samaritan hills withdraw and the valley widens first to eight miles and then gradually to fourteen which is the breadth at Jericho." — *Geo. Adam Smith.* **Rose up . . . cut off.** If in any way the river was dammed up at this narrow gorge, the waters would accumulate above the dam, and form a great lake extending far up the river, while the waters below would all flow away into the Dead Sea, leaving the bed of the river comparatively dry. And this would continue till the mass of water above had become so

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17. And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jor'dan,[1] and all the Is'ra-el-ites / Is'ra-el passed over on dry ground, until all the people / nation were passed clean over Jor'dan.

[1] Ex. 14: 29.

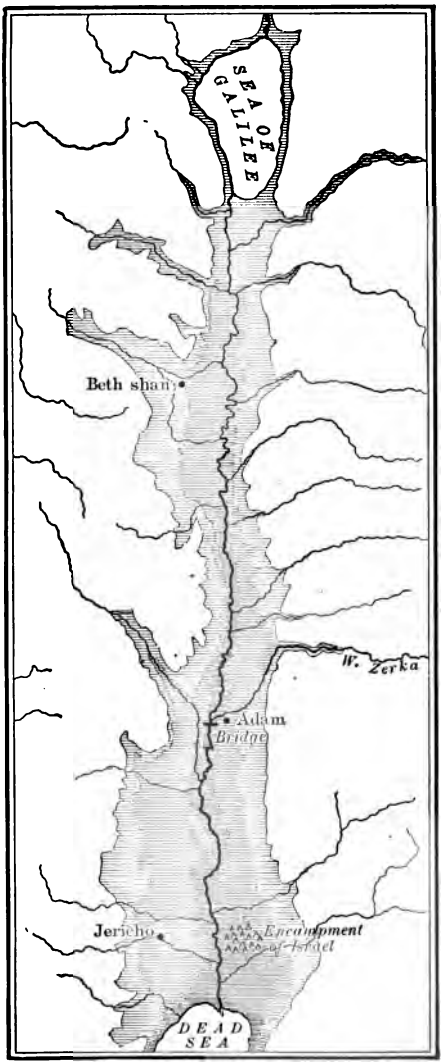
great as to break through the obstacle. In the meantime the Israelites could cross over wherever the bottom was hard enough, and could all reach the other side in a few hours.

THE SECONDARY CAUSE. Some think that the river was blocked by the fall of a cliff, which is certainly possible, or there may have been a land-slip, as Tristram suggests. Prof. George Frederick Wright, the eminent geologist, who has just returned (March, 1901) from a long geological tour in the East, tells me that he has lately examined this region, and that if some volcanic action, of which there are abundant signs, had elevated the valley at this place even so much as fifteen feet, it would accomplish exactly what is described in this lesson. Such volcanic elevation is not uncommon, as, for instance, not so long ago in the Sierra Nevada mountains. See Lyell's *Geology*. The waters, after a brief time, would cut a channel through and flow on as before.

ILLUSTRATION. "M. Ganneau has drawn attention to a fact mentioned in the history of Sultan Beybars, that in A. D. 1267, whilst the bridge at Jisr Damieh (or Adam) was being repaired, a land-slip, some miles above, dammed up the Jordan for several hours, and the bed of the river below was left dry, the water being drained off to the Dead Sea. What occurred six hundred and fifty years ago, by what we call natural causes, may well have occurred three thousand years before, timed by divine interposition." — *Canon Tristram* in *S. S. Times*.

ILLUSTRATION. Mr. Richard Glover tells us of a time when there was "considerable discussion about 'dockizing' the river Avon, that is, so throwing a dam across the mouth that all the river up to Bristol would be converted into one huge dock. And in the discussion the strength of such a dam, its cost, its leakage, the right place for it, how to provide for the outlet of all water above a certain level, were canvassed by all. Here we have the 'dockizing' for a day or two of the river Jordan, a very much larger river than the Avon, one whose very name suggests the swiftness of its current."

17. And the priests that bare the ark. When they touched the water the stream subsided, and they bore the ark into the middle of the river bed, and there **stood firm on dry ground**, with



Map of the Jordan Valley.

Showing its banks of different altitudes, and where the waters were dammed up for the Israelites to cross.

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good footing and without flinching from fear of the waters rushing upon them from above. This required no little faith. The priests were about three fifths of a mile up stream above the people, and were thus seen by all; and their faith encouraged the people to venture into the bed of the river. **And all the Israelites passed over on dry ground.** Probably at different points, over a wide space. They were now fairly standing upon the Promised Land, on the eve of conquest, and after that, of rest. "The ark stood above. The army passed below. The women and children, according to the Jewish tradition, were placed in the center, from the fear lest they should be swept away by the violence of the current. The host, at different points probably, rushed across. The priests remained motionless, their feet sunk in the deep mud of the river." — *Stanley, Jewish Church.* Thus the whole people crossed in safety, in a very few hours, and stood for the first time in their new home. They encamped at Gilgal. Then the river returned to its usual course. There was no retreat now. It was victory or death.

ILLUSTRATION. *The Goths crossing the Danube.* "When in the fourth century of the Christian era, the Goths, amounting to nearly one million persons of both sexes and of all ages, crossed the Danube, which had been swelled by incessant rains, a large fleet of vessels, of boats, and of canoes was provided; yet many days and nights they passed and repassed with indefatigable toil, and, notwithstanding the most strenuous efforts of the officers, many were swept away and drowned by the rapid violence of the current." — *Thornley Smith.*

V. **Memorials.** — The twelve chosen men carried each one a large stone from the bottom of the river, and placed them in a conspicuous place as a memorial of the great thing God had done for them. They gave frequent occasion for repeating this story to children and children's children, as a training in faith, hope, and love to God. It was a perpetual object-lesson and education. Another heap was placed in the bed of the river, marking the spot where the ark was placed while the people were crossing.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. "The crossing of the Jordan was a crisis in the world's history. There is only one date in history transcending this in importance, — the date when across a wider Jordan, the dividing line between heaven and earth, God came in the person of a little babe to make a conquest of a world of promise." — *Richard Glover.*

2. A Jordan flows between us and every best good of life, — new life, usefulness, education, higher spheres, enlarged lives, the redeemed earth, heaven, — our Promised Land.

3. "The crossing of the Jordan was to be the great *initiative of the conquest.* Such *crossing over* is unquestionably the great need of the majority of Christians; not to make some slight change, but to get upon *new ground.* The great lesson of Jordan is the power of Christ's resurrection to separate us not only from Egypt, but from all wilderness wanderings, and to secure for us an entrance into heavenly places." — *Miss Smiley.*

4. New eras and epochs in life are often of great value. They may lift the life to a higher level; they are doors to a larger sphere and nobler vision.

> "They must upward still and onward, who would keep abreast of truth;
> Lo, before us gleam her camp fires: we ourselves must Pilgrims be,
> Launch our Mayflower, and steer boldly through the desperate winter sea."
> — *Lowell.*

5. God still does wondrous things for his people, marvels that prove that he is with them, and which encourage them to go on in the conquest of evil, — marvels of converting power, of holy lives, of triumph over temptation, trouble, and death.

6. Every one needs to take a decided stand, a positive step that cannot be retraced, and commit himself to the side of right and of God. A decided stand is often more than half a victory.

ILLUSTRATIONS. When Cortez landed upon the shores of America, with his army, for the conquest of Mexico, he burned his ships behind him. There was no retreat. They must conquer or die. So Cesar, in his *Commentaries*, tells us that the Helvetii, when they migrated, burned up everything they could not take with them. Houses, villages, crops, everything that could hold out to them any inducement to turn back from whatever obstacles or foes they might encounter, were given to the flames. The same was true of the Exodus forty years before.

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7. Death is like the river Jordan, separating us from the blessedness of the future life. See 2 Cor. 5: 1, 8; Phil. 1: 23; Luke 23: 43. The scene in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, where Christian reaches the River of Death, and is welcomed by the shining ones on the other side. Compare the hymns, "There is a land of pure delight," and "On Jordan's rugged banks I stand."

8. We need to keep in mind what God has done for us in the past. The Christian sacraments are memorials which hold the great truths of the gospel before the mind. They are irrefragable witnesses to the great facts of Christianity. They are a public and unceasing testimony to the world about God and Christ and the gospel. Everywhere their voice is heard. They are an easy occasion and method of teaching the great truths of religion. The Sabbath, the Lord's Supper, Easter, Christmas are Christian memorials. The Fourth of July, Thanksgiving Day, New Year's, Decoration Day are patriotic memorials. Birthdays, marriage anniversaries, commencement days, etc., are personal memorials. Rightly kept, all these are a means of education and of perpetuating great truths.

When Bunyan's Pilgrim had escaped from the castle of Giant Despair, he put up a monument of God's mercy and of warning.

LESSON III. — October 19.

THE FALL OF JERICHO. — Joshua 6: 12–20.

Study Josh. 6: 8–20. **Read John 5: 13–11: 23.**

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***By faith the walls of Jericho fell down.*** — HEB. 11: 30.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Starting Points. — (1) Bring to notice the present position of the Israelites after the crossing, as learned from the last lesson, and the probable effect on the inhabitants of Jericho. (2) The need of special divine manifestations, in order to teach Israel the reality and the greatness of God, a lesson which it is difficult even for us to realize.

Washington Gladden illustrated God's use of natural law in miracles, by the electric light which was shining on his pulpit while he was speaking. It was shining according to natural law, but by his creative will he turned the light off, and then turned it on again. A miracle is simply God's putting his will into the workings of natural law, and no more interferes with them than turning the electric key interferes with electrical law.

On the Way. — (1) **Use** the map. (2) **Read** the several chapters noted in "The Section."

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. Early in April, about B. C. 1451 or 1251.

Place. Gilgal and Jericho in the plain on the west side of Jordan.

LEARN BY HEART.

Heb. 11: 1, 6; Eph. 6: 10–13.

THE SECTION

includes Joshua 5–10.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

The books noted at the beginning of the quarter. Concerning the walls of Jericho there is some new information in Professor Bliss' "Mounds of Palestine" in *Recent Research in Bible Lands*, p. 41. Prof. Geo. Adam Smith throws new light on the subject in his *Historical Geography*, p. 268. There are some excellent notes on "horns" and on "Herem," *i. e.*, things accursed or devoted, in *The Polychrome*, on Joshua, and especially in the article by Prof. W. J. Beecher in the *S. S. Times*, Aug. 17, 1895. Blaikie's *Manual of Bible History*. Dean Stanley's *History of the Jewish Church*, vol. II., on this conquest. With reference to the ideas with which the Israelites entered Canaan, consult a sermon by Phillips Brooks, fifth series, Sermon XVII., entitled "New Experiences." Bunyan's *Holy War*, "The Capture of Mansoul," is a good illustration. Notes on the conquest from the higher criti-

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LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: The Good Fight of Faith.

I. PREPARATIONS FOR TAKING POSSESSION OF THE LAND.

1. The covenant renewed.
2. Revival of the Passover festival.
3. The new form of dependence on God.
4. The real Captain of the Lord's host.

II. JERICHO, THE FIRST CITY TO BE POSSESSED.

Description.
Strength of the defenses.
The modern strongholds for us to conquer by faith.

III. THE STRANGE ATTACK (vs. 1–16, 20).

Order of the march.
The silence and the shout.
A type of some attacks on the strongholds of sin.

IV. THE DESTRUCTION OF JERICHO (vs. 17–19).

What was done with the city and the spoil.
Reasons.

cal standpoint in Professor Moore's *International Critical Commentary* on *Judges;* in Prof. Geo. A. Smith's volume on *Joshua* in the same series, which is not out at the time of this writing, but will probably be issued before this lesson is studied. An arrangement of the sources of Joshua is given in *The Polychrome* Joshua.

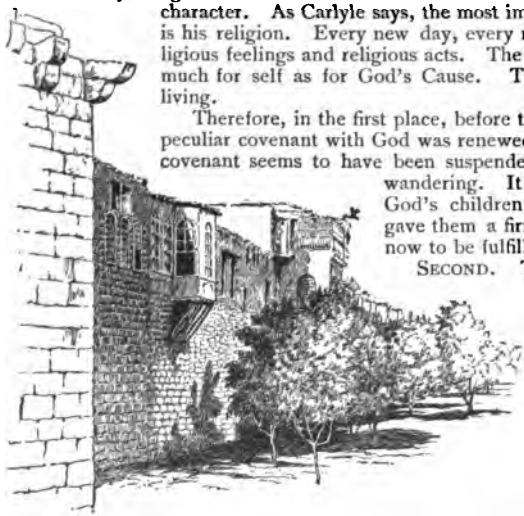
CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

Subjects to be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

New fruits instead of manna.
The religious motive of the Israelites.
The Captain of the Lord's host.
Jericho.
Why this method of attack.
Jericho "devoted." Practical suggestions.

I. Preparations for taking Possession of the Land. — FIRST. THE RENEWAL OF THE COVENANT. — Josh. 5: 1–9. The Israelites were now actually in the Promised Land, without the possibility of retreat. It was "victory or death." And victory could come only through divine help, and even if they could gain possession, it would be of little value to them unless, and only so far as, they worshiped sincerely the true God, and were his peculiar people in training to understand and promulgate the true religion. Hence they began their new life in their new home by observing their religious duties, in honor and obedience to God, by whose power alone they could have a prosperous national existence. Religion lay at the foundation of the nation. Besides, it made all their warfare and work religious. It was not for themselves chiefly, but for the Cause, the cause of God for all time, that they fought and suffered.

To-day, religion lies at the foundation of our national hopes and of our individual character. As Carlyle says, the most important thing in any person or nation is his religion. Every new day, every new work, should be begun with religious feelings and religious acts. The whole of life should be lived not so much for self as for God's Cause. This transforms and transfigures daily living.



From a Photograph by Wilson.
House on City Wall.

Therefore, in the first place, before they entered upon the conquest, their peculiar covenant with God was renewed by the sign of circumcision. This covenant seems to have been suspended during most of the forty years of wandering. It was the visible token that they were God's children and inheritors of the promises. It gave them a firmer assurance that the promises were now to be fulfilled.

SECOND. THE REVIVAL OF THE PASSOVER FESTIVAL. — Josh. 5: 10. This had been omitted since they left Sinai. It recalled to mind the wonders God had done for them in delivering them from Egypt, the most powerful nation then existing. It thrilled them with assurance of faith. The song of God who "hath triumphed gloriously, the horse and the rider he hath cast into the sea," was again to be sung in action. He that saved them from the Egyptians could and

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would save them from the enemies now before them.

The remembrance of what God has done for us in the past, especially his love in sending his Son, is a source of hope and assurance in all days to come. It is the dawn after darkness, promising a bright to-morrow. The fact of God's goodness and power shines like a star through all the clouds that surround us. We trust in promises that have been tried and proved.



From a Photograph by Bonfils.

Ruined Walls in Jericho.

THIRD. THE NEW FORM OF DEPENDENCE ON GOD. — Josh. 5: 11, 12. At the close of the Passover the miraculous manna ceased, and henceforth the people lived on the fruits which the land itself supplied. The special gift was withheld when their wants could be supplied through the ordinary laws of nature. God gives special helps for special needs, but it is better that our daily support should come through the ordinary channels. Nature's fruits are as really God's gift as miraculous manna. "The bread of the land, although not manna, was still bread from heaven." "There is as much divine power in the maintenance of the soul in holiness and righteousness all its days as in the communication of unspeakable visions." "Do not fret if the rhapsodies and outbursts and exuberant manifestations of earlier days have ceased. It is better to live by the ordinary laws of human life than by the abnormal and miraculous." — *F. B. Meyer.*

People are too apt to look for special divine interference for the progress of the church, or our own development and progress, instead of the power of the Holy Spirit through means, through daily duty, through hard and patient toil.

FOURTH. THE REAL CAPTAIN OF THE LORD'S HOST. Either in a vision or in a visible form, the Angel of the Lord appeared to Joshua, who was apparently reconnoitering the city of Jericho to see what steps could be taken for its capture. The fortifications were altogether too strong for people totally unprepared with means for breaking down such walls; and the only way open to them seemed to be the slow one of a siege, till the city was starved into surrender; but this would be a dangerous plan, for it would give time for all the nations of Canaan to combine in one grand attack upon the defenseless Israelites. Doubtless Joshua was praying to God for light upon this most difficult of questions, when suddenly there appeared to him one with a drawn sword in his hand. He declared himself to be the Captain of the host of the Lord, — not of the earthly armies alone or chiefly, but of all the hosts of heaven, the angels, the organized forces of nature, all spiritual powers and influences. He proceeds to show Joshua in what way he can capture the city fortress. For henceforth there is to be no pillar of cloud and fire to guide, but the unseen God. This was a transition event.

PRACTICAL. We, too, have a Captain of the Lord's host. He is the assurance of the divine presence. He guides us and works wonders for us and through us in the warfare against sin. There are many Jerichos to be taken, — the sinful heart, the sinful world, the walled cities of Intemperance, Crime, Corruption, Dishonesty, entrenched in customs, wealth, passions, selfish interests, and pleasures.

"But the earthly warfare is only one division of the divine warfare against the principalities and powers of sin. But all the hosts of heaven are interested in it, as all the nation is interested in the issues of a battle in some insignificant village. It is exalting, enlarging, inspiring to be a part of a great movement in a noble cause."

II. **Jericho, the First City to be Possessed.** — About three miles a little to the northwest of Gilgal, where the Israelites were encamped, was the walled city of Jericho, amid its groves of palms, on the western border of the Jordan plain at the foot of the hills. It was called the *City of Palms*, "from a glorious palm forest which stretched along

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12. And Jŏsh'u-a rose early in the morning,[1] and the priests took up the ark of the LORD.

[1] Deut. 31: 25; Lev. 27: 28; Mic. 4: 13.

the vale, about eight miles in length and three in breadth, Jericho being situated on the west side, and Gilgal (it is believed) on the east of the forest." "The city was beautifully situated at the foot of a lofty limestone range, close by a number of copious fountains, that still spread beauty and fertility as far as the eye can reach. Trickling through glades of tangled forest shrub, these streams even yet nourish a luxuriant herbage, and nothing is needed but the hand of cultivation to make the spot one of the richest and most beautiful on earth." — *Blaikie.* "Jericho was the gateway of a province, the emporium of a large trade, the mistress of a great palm forest, woods of balsam, and very rich gardens. . . . Her year is one long summer." — *G. A. Smith.* "Not only was it conspicuous among the other Canaanitish towns for its wall and gates and its rich temple filled with gold, silver, iron, brass, and even Mesopotamian drapery, but its situation was such as must always have rendered its occupation necessary to any invader from that quarter. It was the key of Western Palestine, as standing at the entrance of the two main passes into the central mountains." — *Stanley.*

NOT SO STRONG AS IT SEEMED. The fact is that "in war she has always been easily taken. That her walls fell down at the sound of Joshua's trumpets is no exaggeration, but the soberest summary of all her history." — *G. A. Smith.*

For this three reasons are given: —

1. According to Dr. F. J. Bliss, who has investigated the remains of what is regarded as the site of ancient Jericho, he found that the walls were built of *mud-bricks.* "I was able to recognize mud-brick walls at various levels." "Near the base, close by the bubbling fountain, a hole has been recently scooped out . . . revealing a mud-brick wall." "I confess to the belief that this may be the wall that fell before the eyes of Joshua, the son of Nun." — *Recent Research, pp. 40, 41.*

2. The situation was such that the hills overlooking the city could be used by the enemy for attack, and they could cut off that part of the city's water supply which came from the uplands.

3. "Her people seem never to have been distinguished for bravery; and, indeed, in that climate how could they? Enervated by the great heat which degrades all the inhabitants of the Ghôr, and unable to endure on their bodies aught but linen (Josephus' *Wars*, 4: 8; 3), it was impossible they could be warriors. . . . We forget how near neighbors they had been to Sodom and Gomorrah. No great man was born in Jericho; no heroic deed was ever done in her. She has been called 'the key' and 'the guard-house' of Judea; she was only the pantry." — *Historical Geography, p. 268.*

III. **The Strange Attack.** — Vs. 1–16, 20. The plan of the attack was for the people to march around the city once a day for six days, and on the seventh day to march around it seven times, the last time with a long blast of the trumpets and a great shout from all the people, when the walls were to fall flat.

At first sight there is a seeming contradiction between vs. 4, 8, 9, requiring the trumpets to blow each time the people went around, and vs. 10, 16, 20, requiring the people to be silent till they heard the trumpets blow, and then to shout. Some critics regard this as showing that different and contradictory accounts were woven together by an editor. But an editor would not be likely to put plain contradictions in his completed account. And a closer study shows that there is no contradiction. For according to v. 5 it was when the priests blew a long blast, distinctly different from the marching music, that the people, hitherto silent, were to send up the great shout. The order of the march seems to have been: —

1. A division of soldiers marching at the head of the procession in silence.

2. Then a company of seven priests with rams' horns blowing the marching music, like drums in our time.

3. Then came the ark of the covenant borne by priests.

4. After these came the rearward, consisting of the rest of the men of Israel, marching in silence around the city. No sign of triumph was to be raised, no words of rejoicing over the foe, nor of consciousness of strength. But in solemn, reverent silence, as if God alone were speaking to them, in meditation and silent prayer they were to move around the city, as if engaged in a religious service.

12. **Early in the morning.** In warm climates the early morning is the best time for travel and work.

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13. And the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually, and blew with the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; but the rereward and the rearward came after the ark of the LORD, *the priests* going on, and blowing with the trumpets as they went.

14. And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days.

15. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about at the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times.

16. And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Jŏsh'u-a said unto the people, Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city.

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13. **Trumpets of rams' horns.** These "horns as a rule were straightened and flattened by heat. The horns of any animal may be shaped either by heat or by boiling in oil." "Only three proper tones are usually obtained." See "The Shofar" in *Report of U. S. Nat. Museum for 1892*, pp. 437–450. — *Polychrome Bible.* **The rereward.** Those bringing up the rear. The rear guard.



Trumpet made of Ram's Horn.

14. **So they did six days.** Doubtless these inhabitants of Jericho made themselves merry with this sight. Wicked men think God in jest when he is preparing for their judgment. — *Bishop Hall.* "The plan no doubt exposed them to two things which men do not like, ridicule and danger. Possibly the ridicule was as hard to bear as the danger. God would protect them from the danger, but who would shield them from the ridicule?" —*Blaikie.*

On the other hand, Kitto says, "We do not, with some, think the proceeding was likely to awaken the mirth of the inhabitants of Jericho, — more likely was it to make a solemn impression upon their minds."

15. **On the seventh day.** The circuit was made seven times; an all day's service.

16. **At the seventh time,** while the people were surrounding the city, **when the priests blew with the trumpets,** the long blast announced in v. 5 to be the signal. **Joshua said . . . Shout.** The Orientals take a peculiar delight in noise. "When our people are in dead earnest, they are generally silent; but the more in earnest an Oriental is, the louder he shouts. Even Arab boatmen, when in great danger, and every man is doing his utmost in struggling with the waves, will waste a lot of strength and breath in shouting." — *Hon. Selah Merrill.* **For the Lord hath given you the city.** The result is given in v. **20. The wall fell down flat.** Of course the shouting and the blare of the trumpets had no power to overthrow the broad walls of the city; but it connected the people with the miracle in outward form to show that only as they were really connected with it by faith would the work be done for them. The secondary means, some think, to have been an earthquake, but even then it must have been miraculous in its timing and in its limitation to the city, while the surrounding Israelites were untouched.

AN INTERESTING COMPARISON. It is not at all likely that the explanation some have given is true, — that the keynote of the wall was struck by the tramping of the soldiers, the shouts of the people, and the blare of the trumpets, and that this caused the mud walls to fall. Such a thing has never been done. At the same time there are some interesting facts closely allied to it.

"All structures, large or small, simple or complex, have a definite rate of vibration, depending on their material, size, and shape, as fixed as the fundamental note of a musical chord. When the bridge at Colebrooke Dale (the first iron bridge in the world) was building, a fiddler came along and said he could fiddle it down. The workmen laughed in scorn, and told him to fiddle away to his heart's content. He played until he struck the keynote of the bridge, and it swayed so violently that the astonished workmen commanded him to stop. At one time considerable annoyance was experienced in one of the mills in Lowell. Some days the building was so shaken that a pail of water would be nearly emptied, while on other days all was quiet. Experiment proved it was only when the

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17. And the city shall be accursed, even devoted, even it and all that are is therein, to the LORD: only Rā'hăb the harlot shall live, she and all that are are with her in the house, because [1] she hid the messengers that we sent.

18. And ye, [2] in any wise keep yourselves yourselves from the accursed devoted thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when when ye have devoted it, ye take of the accursed thing, and devoted thing; so should ye make the camp of Is'ra-el a curse, accursed, [3] and trouble it.

[1] Josh. 2: 4. [2] Deut. 7: 26; Josh. 7: 1, 11, 12. [3] Josh. 7: 25.

machinery was running at a certain rate that the building was disturbed. The simple remedy was in running it slower or faster, so as to put it out of time with the building. We have here the reason of the rule observed by marching armies when they cross a bridge, viz.: Stop the music, break step, and open column, lest the measured cadence of a condensed mass of men should urge the bridge to vibrate beyond its sphere of cohesion. Neglect of this has led to fearful accidents. The celebrated engineer, Stephenson, has said there is not so much danger to a bridge when crowded with men and cattle as when men go in marching order. The Broughton bridge, near Manchester, gave way beneath the measured tread of only sixty men. A terrible disaster befell a battalion of French infantry while crossing the suspension bridge at Angiers, in France. Repeated orders were given the troops to break into section, but in the hurry of the moment and in the rain they disregarded the order, and the bridge fell." — *Professor Lovering, of Cambridge.* Tyndall tells us that "while away up amid the Alpine solitudes of Switzerland a few years ago, I noticed the muleteers tied up the bells of their mules, and was told that the protracted combined tinkling would start an avalanche." — *Harper's Young People.*

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS. 1. This plan of capture impressed upon the people the two elements by which all their victories and prosperity could be obtained, — the divine power, leading them to obey and trust God; and the human instrumentality through which that power worked.

2. It well *illustrates* the victories which the gospel was to obtain over all the principalities and powers of earth and hell. No human force was to be used. Nothing but the simple announcement of the truth, and that by the instrumentality of weak and sinful men, was the means chosen for the destruction of idolatry and the establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom over the earth. We should never be dismayed at any outward obstacle or hindrance in the way of God's kingdom; nor at the seeming feebleness of the means to be used.

3. *All* the people shall shout, in order that all may have their part in the victory. So when all Christians utter with all their might the words of Jesus, the kingdom of Satan will soon fall. By the weak things of earth God confounds the mighty (1 Cor. 1: 17–24).

4. By *faith* the walls of Jericho fell down (Heb. 11: 30). All the acts of Joshua and of the people were the fruit of faith. So by faith only will Christians conquer the world, a faith manifested in obedience to the word of our Captain.

IV. **The Destruction of Jericho.** — Vs. 17–20. 17. **And the city shall be accursed,** "devoted," Hebrew, *herem*. "That is *herem* which is *devoted* to God beyond redemption or exchange." "If destructible, that which is *herem* is to be utterly destroyed, thus putting it beyond the reach of every being but God. If not destructible, it is to be put to permanent religious use. The Canaanites and Amalekites were to be made *herem*, that is, utterly destroyed, as a religious act." "The people and animals of Jericho are to be made *herem* by slaughtering them, and the houses and clothing by burning, but the metals (Josh. 6: 19, 24; 7: 1, 11, 21) by putting them into the treasury of the house of Jehovah." — *Prof. Willis J. Beecher.* **Only Rahab the harlot shall live,** because of her aid to the spies, which may have arisen from her longing for a better life and a true religion. However bad her previous conduct, she seems to have repented, and trusted in the true God, and lived a good life henceforth, or she would not have been married to a leading Israelite, an ancestor of Jesus, nor her name be one of the only three women named in his genealogy. A bad past life will not prevent future usefulness and blessing, always provided that the bad is forsaken and hated, and the soul turns to a higher life.

NOTE how she showed her faith by binding the scarlet cord in her window, as told to do by the spies. Whoever saw the scarlet cord spared that house. She was safe, as were those Israelites who forty years before put the blood stains on their door-posts.

18. **Keep yourselves from the accursed thing.** "The Old English Version is here simple, but in part misleading. The R. V. is confused, and the phrase 'when ye have

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19. But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, *are consecrated* / *are holy* unto the LORD: they shall come into the treasury of the LORD.

20. So the people shouted, *when* / *and* *the priests* blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, *and* / *that* the people shouted with a great shout, *that* / *and* [1] the wall fell down [a] flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

[1] V. 5; Heb. 11: 30. [a] Hebrew, *under it.*

devoted it' is erroneous. Transferring the Hebrew word, the clauses come out as follows, *Keep ye from the herem:* In this and in every case a man ought to keep his hands off from that which is religiously devoted to God. *Lest ye cause herem:* Here we have the verb, of the same stem. If you interfere with what has been religiously devoted to destruction, you will bring the same ban upon yourselves and those whom you represent. *And take of the herem:* Everything in Jericho here is *herem*, — devoted to God, to be either destroyed or placed in his treasury. You will be tempted to seize upon some things for yourselves, saving them from destruction, or keeping them from the treasury. Guard against the temptation. *And put the camp of Israel for herem:* If you take that which God has devoted to destruction or to his treasury, you will bring your nation into the condition of a thing similarly devoted." — *Prof. Willis J. Beecher* in *S. S. Times.* The story of the defeat at Ai and the destruction of Achan are the commentary on this verse.

19. **All the silver, and gold,** that could not be destroyed, but could be purified, was used for religious purposes.

This massacre seems terrible. But several things are to be remembered in addition to the suggestions in the last lesson.

1. It was in an untrained, semi-civilized age, and not the best thing absolutely, but the best thing possible under the circumstances.

2. It was a question which should be destroyed, the Israelites or the Canaanites. It was something like a modern self-defense against robbers. It is an awful thing to shoot a man, and yet there are times when the best Christian nations sometimes feel justified in doing it. It is an awful thing to imprison a man, and yet the police duty that requires it is sustained by the best Christian sentiment.

3. God cares for wild animals and all his creatures. We agree with the sentiment of the "Ancient Mariner":—

> "He prayeth best who loveth best
> All things both great and small;
> For the dear God, who loveth us,
> He made and loveth all."

But if we lived in India, where a current report of the Government "shows that during the year 1899 the number of deaths among human beings attributed to wild animals was 2,966 — tigers caused the death of 899, wolves of 338, and leopards of 327 human beings, while bears, elephants, hyenas, jackals, and crocodiles were accountable for a large proportion of the remainder; and the loss of human life from snakes reached the high total of 24,621" — we would not hesitate to destroy the wild animals and the snakes to save the 27,587 human beings.

NOTE. The Israelites were forbidden to take any of the spoil, because they needed the lesson. "The people and cities of Canaan were rich; the Israelites were poor. Canaan had the resources of a somewhat high civilization; gold, silver, vessels of brass and of iron; goodly Babylonish garments — all dazzling before the eyes of a people forty years in a barren wilderness. Now, suppose the Lord had given them free license to plunder, to steal and hide and appropriate all they could lay hands on! This movement for the conquest of Canaan would have become a savage, plundering, marauding expedition, not a whit above the demoralizing wars of all barbarous tribes upon nations largely in advance of themselves in wealth and luxury." — *Cowles.*

ILLUSTRATIONS of the sudden results of unseen forces. (1) The lightning flash preparing for a long time in the unseen gathering of electricity in clouds and earth. (2) How long a time the authorities were busy undermining Hurlgate rocks, beneath the waters, till the little daughter of the commandment touched the electric button. (3) The same is seen in the French Revolution, the Reformation, the destruction of slavery.

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LESSON IV. — October 26.

JOSHUA AND CALEB. — Joshua 14: 5–15.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***He wholly followed the Lord.*** — JOSH. 14: 14.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The Map. — Professor Beecher well says that to understand the conquest it is necessary not only to look at the map, but to study it till the main outlines of the country are firmly fixed in the memory.

The Story. — As there are several interesting stories of the conquest, these should be briefly told.

Review not only the last two lessons, but turn back to the early story of the expedition of the spies, in which Caleb and Joshua had an important part.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. The verses of the lesson belong about six years after the last lesson, B. C. 1445, 1444; or 1244.

Place. Joshua's capital was at Gilgal; Caleb's inheritance at Hebron, twenty miles south of Jerusalem.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: How Faithfulness was Rewarded.

I. THE LAND OF THE CONQUEST.
- The land. The inhabitants.
- The new inhabitants.

II. INCIDENTS OF THE CONQUEST.
- Defeat at Ai.
- The scene on Ebal and Gerizim.
- The battle of Beth-horon.

III. THE DIVISION OF THE LAND.

IV. CALEB AND JOSHUA, A RETROSPECT (vs. 6–9).
- Caleb. Joshua.
- What they had done.
- Promise to Caleb.

V. AN OLD PROMISE FULFILLED (vs. 10–15).
- Caleb's reward.
- Joshua's reward.

VI. SOME PRACTICAL LESSONS, and New Testament Light.

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 12–14; Matt. 6: 33; 25: 29.

THE SECTION

includes Josh. 8: 30 to Josh. 19: 51.

PRONUNCIATIONS.

A'chăn (ā'kăn), A'ī, Aj'ălŏn, An'ăkim, Ar'bă, Bĕth-hō'rŏn, Bĕth-ā'vĕn, Cā'lĕb, Căr'mī, E'băl, Gĕr'ĭzĭm, Gib'ĕŏn, Gĭl'găl, Jĕphŭn'nĕh, Kā'dĕsh-băr'nĕă, Kĕn'ĕz-ites, Kĭr'jăth-ăr'bă, Măkkē'dăh or Măk'kĕdăh, Zăb'di, Zĕ'răh.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

Subjects to be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

- The land.
- The inhabitants.
- Defeat at Ai.
- Renewal of the Covenant.
- "Sun, stand thou still."
- Caleb, and what he had done.
- What was promised to him.
- How the promise was fulfilled.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

Historical Geography, by Prof. Geo. Adam Smith; Canon Cook's *Bible Commentary*, the introduction to the book of Joshua; Geikie's *Hours with the Bible;* Stanley's *Jewish Church*, vol. I., "The Battle of Beth-horon." Josephus' *Antiquities*, IV., 5, 6, 7, gives Jewish traditions. Milton's description of the Canaanite idols, in *Paradise Lost*. Milton took the names of Syrian idols to represent the evil spirits of "Pandemonium." Arnold's *Sermons*, VI., "Wars of the Israelites." The first chapter of Green's *Short History* illustrates from the early English on the shores of the North Sea and in England the condition of Canaan before the conquest; and the conquest itself by the English conquering Britain, then under the Romans, as Canaan was under Egypt; and the good results of the conquest.

I. **The Land of the Conquest.** THE LAND. We will first try to obtain a clear idea of the land as a whole, as presented in Prof. Geo. A. Smith's *Historical Geography*. By means of the accompanying map, we see that the country consists of four or five strips running north and south.

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The Sea.	The Maritime Plain.	The Low Hills. "Shepelah."	The Central Range. "The Mountain."	The Jordan Valley. "Arabah."	The Eastern Range.	Desert.

The central range is broken by the plain of Esdraelon, with which exception it runs from Lebanon southward till it falls away into the Negeb, *i. e.*, the south country.

In the low country the inhabitants could war with cavalry and chariots.

In the central mountains only infantry could be used.

"The central range represents Israel's proper and longest possessions, first won and last lost; while all the valley land and table-land was, for the most part, hardly won and scarcely kept by Israel."

Eastern and western Palestine were almost as separate as the northern and southern cantons of Switzerland with the Alps between.

THE INHABITANTS. The conformation of the land implies the neighborhood of a wonderful variety of races, governments, and systems of civilization. The differences of soil and climate imply differences of occupation and character. So that a revolution or invasion or devastation in one part might take place without affecting the other countries or peoples. Palestine was almost as much divided into petty provinces as Greece, and far more than those of Greece are her divisions intensified by differences of soil and climate. The petty kingdoms often consisted of a single city with its environs, or a small group of towns.

THE NEW INHABITANTS. "Taking the nation as a whole, Israel's entrance into the land marked a *rise in civilization* from the nomadic to the agricultural stage." "From such passages as Deut. 29: 13; 31: 7; 30: 15–18, etc., may we not see that this land was more, in the eyes of their great leaders, than a mere home? It was to be their workshop, school, place of service for God and the world. The mere instinct of possession does not adequately explain their motives and acts." "The spirit which animated the leaders of the people is illustrated in the case of Caleb (Josh. 14: 6–15; 15: 13–19) and of Joshua (Josh. 18: 3; 19: 49, 50). The religious point of view is best set forth by the expressions of Deuteronomy, which may be compared almost at random." "The land placed the Hebrew in the very center of the streams of the human life of the time, midway, as she was, between Egypt and Babylonia. It was an observatory and a school. At the same time, the peculiar topography of the country made it capable



Physical Map of Palestine.

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of sheltering a 'peculiar' people. The opportunities it presented and the demands that it made upon its inhabitants were favorable to the development of a sense of divine care, of a universal providence, of a faith in one God." — *American Institute of Sacred Literature.*

II. **Incidents of the Conquest.** — 1. The one defeat at Ai, and the sin of Achan. One of the most interesting references to this event is that of Hos. 2: 15, where it is said to the people of his day that the valley of Achor (where Achan was burned) should be a door of hope. Putting away Achan's sin was a door to victory. Through this valley the Jews returned from exile in Babylon, when they had put away idolatry forever, and rebuilt their temple and city.

2. *The scene on Ebal and Gerizim*, between which lay the city of Shechem, where many centuries later Jesus, sitting by the well, taught the woman of Samaria concerning the water of life. Hither the people went to renew the covenant, as Moses in his farewell address had commanded them (Deut. 27: 1–14). Half of the tribes were arranged on Mount Ebal, and the other six on Mount Gerizim. The law in substance was written plainly before them on plastered stones. Then in that wonderfully clear air was read in the hearing of the people the law of Moses; and from Gerizim the blessings that would follow obedience, and from Ebal the curses that would follow disobedience (Deut. 27–30). Thus was another safeguard placed around the Israelites and another effort made to train them in obedience, that they might enjoy the blessings of the Promised Land.

A special reason for this, which we are apt to forget, is that very few could read, very few could have written copies of the law, even if they could read them. Some such method as the above was absolutely necessary in order to keep the law in the minds of the people, till they could settle down in peace, and institute schools and regular Sabbath worship.

3. At Beth-horon, in the mountain pass between Jerusalem and the western plain, twelve miles northwest of that city, a combination of the petty nations gathered in great force (Josh. 10: 1–15). This was one of the greatest and most decisive battles of the campaign, worthy of the prolonging of the day in order that the victory might be complete, at the command of Joshua, —

> "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon,
> And thou, Moon, in the Valley of Ajalon."

This seems to be a recognized poem from the book of Jasher, apparently a collection of poems or songs about Hebrew heroes, from which David taught the children of Israel "The Song of the Bow" (2 Sam. 1: 18). And hence many modern scholars think it to be a poetical expression like *the stars fighting* against Sisera (Judg. 5: 20), *the melting down* of the mountains (Isa. 34: 3; Mic. 1: 4), *the skipping of Lebanon* (Psa. 29: 6), *the rending of the heavens* (Isa. 64: 1). Others believe that an "extraordinary refraction of the sunlight, a parhelion or some similar natural phenomenon, might have produced the desired prolongation." If Edersheim's translation is correct, "Hasted not to go — like (as on) a complete day," this explanation would suffice. But the Bible implies that it was a miracle. There certainly is nothing in the objection raised that "if the rotation of the earth on its axis were suddenly arrested, all human beings on its surface and all loose objects whatever must have been flung forward with prodigious violence; just as, on a small scale, on the sudden stoppage of a carriage, we find ourselves thrown forward, the motion of the carriage having been communicated to our bodies." For the action of a force like gravity would stop the motion of the earth around its axis in ten or twelve minutes so imperceptibly that not even a leaf on the tree would be shaken, just as a cannon ball shot upwards is stopped. There is nothing said about the earth being stopped suddenly, as a railroad train striking another in disastrous shock.

Hailstones at Beth-horon (Josh. 10: 11). "In 1859 a very similar disaster overtook the Austrians at the battle of Solferino. Commodore Porter describes a hailstorm on the Bosphorus in 1831, while he was crossing in a boat. One of the boatmen had his hand literally smashed, a second was much injured in the shoulder, and the others were all more or less hurt. One hailstone broke the blade of an oar. Two men were killed on shore, and many had limbs broken. Some of the pieces of ice picked up were over a pound in weight, and many three quarters of a pound." — *Geikie.*

III. **The Division of the Land.** — Josh. 13 and 14: 1–5. Finally, at the close of six or seven years' war, the land was so far subdued that it could be divided among the nine and one half tribes who settled west of the Jordan, the other two and one half tribes having already received their portion on the east of Jordan. It was assigned by lot at a great assembly at Gilgal. But there was still much to do before each tribe could settle in perfect

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5. [1] As the LORD commanded Mō'ses, so the children of Is'ra-el did, and they divided the land.

6. Then the children of Jū'dah (*came drew nigh*) unto Jŏsh'u-a in Gĭl'găl: and Cā'leb the son of Jē-phŭn'neh the [2] (*Ken'ez-ite Ken'iz-zite*) said unto him, Thou knowest [3] the thing that the LORD (*said spake*) unto Mō'ses the man of God concerning me and (*concerning*) thee [4] in Kā'desh-bar'ne-a.

7. Forty years old (*was was*) I when Mō'ses the servant of the LORD [5] sent me from Kā'desh-bar'ne-a to (*espy spy*) out the land; and I brought him word again as (*it was it was*) in mine heart.

8. Nevertheless [6] my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly [7] followed the LORD my God.

[1] Num. 35: 2; Josh. 21: 2.
[2] Num. 32: 12; Josh. 15: 17.
[3] Num. 14: 24, 30; Deut. 1: 36.
[4] Num. 13: 26.
[5] Num. 13: 6.
[6] Num. 13: 31, 32.
[7] Num. 14: 24.

peace. Each family had its farm with an absolute title. It could be alienated for a time, but at the end of every fifty years there was to be a restoration to each family of the family portion. This did not include city property. Thus perpetual poverty was excluded from the family; yet each person suffered for neglect and idleness, and was rewarded for diligence.

IV. **Caleb and Joshua. A Retrospect.** — Vs. 6–9. **6. Then the children of Judah**, who had not yet received their portion by lot (Josh. 15), **came**, probably by representative leaders, to aid Caleb who belonged to their tribe. Dr. Steele thinks that they came by his request "lest they might suspect that he was using his office of commissioner to carve out a splendid portion for himself. They may have seconded his petition as having an important bearing on the question of their own portion, which would naturally contain the tract of Caleb, their tribesman, so that the granting of their request would virtually establish southern Canaan as their lot." **Caleb . . . the Kenezite**, the descendant of Kenaz, the son of Esau. "The probabilities are that Caleb, or his father, became members of the tribe of Judah by adoption." — *Professor Beecher.* "The faith of this family was preeminently the fruit of conviction, and not the accident of heredity. It had a firmer basis than that of most Israelites. It was woven more closely into the texture of their being, and swayed their lives more powerfully. It is pleasing to think that there may have been many such proselytes; that the promise to Abraham may have attracted souls from the east, and the west, and the north, and the south" (a foretaste of the glorious fulfilment yet to come). "Caleb is one of those men whom we meet with seldom in Bible history, but whenever we do meet them we are the better for the meeting. Bright and brave, strong, modest, and cheerful, there is honesty in his face, courage and decision in the very pose of his body, and the calm confidence of faith in his very look and attitude." — *Blaikie.* **Thou knowest.** Hebrew, "Thou thyself knowest." **In Kadesh-barnea.** On the southern border of the Promised Land, whence the twelve spies were sent out. See Lesson VIII. of third quarter.



From a Photograph by Bonfils.

General View of Shechem.

7. Forty years old was I. He was, therefore, 85 years old at this time (v. 10). He was in the prime of life and vigor when he went on the dangerous expedi-

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9. And Mō'ses sware on that day, saying, [1] Surely the land [2] whereon thy (feet have / foot hath) trodden shall be (thine / an) inheritance, and thy children's / to thee and to thy children for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God.

10. And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, [3] as he (said, / spake,) these forty and five years, even since / from the time that the LORD spake this word unto Mō'ses, while the children of Is'ra-el wandered / walked in the wilderness: and now, lo, I (am / am) this day fourscore and five years old.

11. [4] As yet I (am as / am as) strong this day as I (was / was) in the day that Mō'ses sent me: as my strength (was / was) then, even so (is / is) my strength now, for war, both / and [5] to go out, and to come in.

12. Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how [6] the An'a-kims were / An'a-kim were there, and that the cities were great and / and fenced: [7] if so be the LORD will be / it may be that the LORD will be with me, then / and [8] I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said, / spake.

[1] Num. 14: 23, 24; Josh. 1: 3.
[2] Num. 13: 22.
[3] Num. 14: 30.
[4] Deut. 34: 7.
[5] Deut. 31: 2.
[6] Num. 13: 28, 33.
[7] Psa. 18: 32; Rom. 8: 31.
[8] Josh. 15: 14; Judg. 1: 20.

tion. **I brought him word again as it was in mine heart.** Under trying circumstances he spoke out sincerely and bravely, because his heart was sincere and courageous.

8. Nevertheless my brethren. "Caleb felt and spoke kindly of those who differed with him, even when the difference was vital. This is another of the secrets of his success. It is touching to hear the old hero say *my brethren*, speaking of these other men who have all gone to their reward. He prefers not to think exclusively of the ten cowards who discouraged the people by their report, but rather of the ten heroic comrades who had stood by him and Joshua throughout the perils of that important scouting expedition." — *Professor Beecher.* **But I wholly followed the Lord,** by being true to his convictions, by putting his trust in God, and remembering all the wonderful deeds he had done, and believing the promises he had made. "Caleb was so strong and manly because 'he wholly followed the Lord.' What a charm there is in *manliness*, in its vigor, its honesty, in its fortitude, and daring. And godliness begets it." — *R. Glover.*

9. Moses sware on that day, saying. This promise is recorded in Num. 14; 24; Deut. 1: 36. **Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance.** This was a fitting reward for his steadfastness, truth, and faith. These two heroes, Caleb and Joshua, had to withstand the whole tide of excited feeling and fear that made the people weep all night, and prepare to rebel against Moses, choose new leaders, and return to bondage in Egypt. The people tried to stone them to death, and were prevented only by the glory of the Lord shining forth from the tabernacle. Caleb and Joshua both lived to enter the Promised Land. Caleb received, as his possession, Hebron, the very place he searched as a spy, where were the best fruits and the strongest enemies. Joshua had his name changed from Oshea, a prayer, *the Lord save*, to Jehoshua, *the Lord saves*, and the Lord saved the people through him. He was their leader next to Moses.

V. **An Old Promise now Fulfilled.** — Vs. 10–15. **10. The Lord hath kept me alive.** As he promised. One promise fulfilled gave the assurance that the other would be. Forty-five years before he had gone into this land, and it had been promised him. He had, as it were, taken the deed of the land, but not taken possession. Why was the fulfilment so long delayed? Because its fulfilment before this would have been of no use to him, or worse than useless. He could not have enjoyed the land till it was conquered by the Israelites. So the fulfilment of many a promise has been delayed, because we were not prepared to receive it, or because it would have been no blessing had it come sooner. The delay also is a test of our faith, to prove whether we will wholly follow the Lord. Only to such can the best blessings come. See "The Delayed Blessings Office," in *Expectation Corner*, a tract.

11. Yet I am as strong this day as I was. Spoken to give assurance that he could take possession of the land.

12. Now therefore give me this mountain. Not a particular mountain, but the mountainous region in which Hebron was situated. "Hebron is the highest city of southern Palestine, being six hundred feet higher than Jerusalem, and two thousand six

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13. And Jŏsh'u-a [1] blessed him; [2] and he gave He'bron unto Cā'lĕb the son of Jē-phŭn'nĕh for an inheritance.

14. [3] Therefore He'bron became the inheritance of Cā'leb the son of Jē-phŭn'-nĕh the Ken'iz-zite unto this day; because that he [4] wholly followed the LORD, the God of Is'ra-el.

15. Now [5] the name of Hē'bron before was Kir'jath-ar'ba; beforetime was Kir'i-ath-ar'ba; *which Ar'bă was* a great man among the An'a-kim. [6] And the land had rest from war.

[1] Josh. 22: 6.
[2] Josh. 10: 37; 21: 11.
[3] Josh. 21: 12.
[4] Vs. 8, 9.
[5] Gen. 23: 2; Josh. 15: 13.
[6] Josh. 11: 23.

hundred feet above the Mediterranean." — *Johnson.* **The Anakims** (a race of giants) **were there, and that the cities were great and fenced.** Fortified with strong walls. These things are mentioned because it shows how great his faith was that in the presence of the seemingly insurmountable difficulties he could believe the promise of God to overcome them. **If so be the Lord will be with me,** not expressing doubt, but a statement of the only means by which he could succeed. **I shall be able to drive them out.** His faith had not diminished. He believed forty-five years before, and he still believed in God's promise and help. His whole experience during those years tended to strengthen his faith. "Caleb had already dispossessed them once, but they had somehow got back again." "There is some obscurity and much difference of opinion connected with the passages concerning Hebron. We are told that Joshua captured Hebron and Debir (Josh. 10: 36–39; 12: 10, 13), cutting off the Anakim from these places, so that no Anakim were left save some in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod (Josh. 11: 21, 22), and this, apparently, before the division of the land. Joshua may have done this through some general, — Caleb, for instance, — but it must have been done within certain limits of time. Differing with many, I think that the incidents recorded in Josh. 15: 13–19, duplicated in Judg. 1: 10–15, belong to the campaign of Josh. 10: 16–43; that Caleb and Othniel, under Joshua, were the heroes of that part of the campaign; and that the Anakim had been able, later, to come up from the Philistine country and reconquer Hebron. So Caleb's request is a peculiar one. This old veteran, whose services would have entitled him to almost any reward he might ask, did not seek for a soft place for his declining years, but for authority to do yet more hard fighting." — *Professor Beecher* in *S. S. Times.*

13. **And Joshua blessed him.** "Joined with his gratitude for the courageous declaration, an expression of his good wishes, and prayer for the success of his undertaking." — *Lange.* **Hebron for an inheritance.** Many historical associations clustered about this place, and gave added interest to its possession.

14. **Unto this day.** When the book was written, or revised by some later hand.

15. **The name of Hebron before was Kirjath-arba.** That is, "the city of *Arba.*" **A great man** (R. V., "the greatest man") **among the Anakims.** A race of giants. "Hebron would appear to have been the original name of the city, and it was not till after Abraham's stay there that it received the name *Kirjath-arba,* who was not the founder, but the conqueror of the city, having led thither the tribe of the Anakim to which he belonged. It retained this name till it came into the possession of Caleb, when the Israelites restored the original name *Hebron.*" — *Keil* in *Cambridge Bible.* "It was called by both names for centuries." **And the land had rest from war.** This was for a time. But the inhabitants were not wholly subdued, and made no little trouble later, both morally and socially.

VI. **Some Practical Lessons.** — 1. We learn a lesson concerning the conquest of the Promised Land of our own souls. It is to be won, every inch of it, with marvelous divine help, but also by hard battles and persevering courage. Sin has no right there and we must drive it out in all its forms. "There are those who sigh for holiness and beauty of character, but they are not willing to pay the price. They sing, 'More holiness give me,' and dream of some lofty spiritual attainment, some transfiguration, but they are not willing to endure the toils, fight the battles, and make the self-sacrifices necessary to win these celestial heights. They want a larger spiritual inheritance, but they have no thought of taking it in primeval forests which their own hands must cut down."— *John R. Miller.*

2. The whole world is to be conquered for Christ. Not an enemy is to be left. But it is to be conquered by spiritual, not carnal weapons, and by the wonderful power of the

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Holy Spirit. The victory does not destroy men but sins, and crimes, and bad customs, and wicked feelings, transforming and blessing the people by the conquest.

3. "To prevent this (petrification) only one specific is known to man, and that is to be constantly in campaign against the evils of the world. One of the great uses of the devil is to keep the church from the lethargy that ends in death." — *William H. Stead.*

4. There are "Anakim" in our inheritance. "Some of the highest blessings are fenced about with the greatest difficulties. (1) No earthly inheritance is without its peculiar disadvantages. Some of the 'Anakim' which resists us in our efforts to fulfil our mission (*a*) the evil in our own heart, *e. g.*, indolence, fear, earthliness; (*b*) the temptations of the world, arising from bad examples, customs, distracting pleasures; (*c*) direct hindrance in persecution and opposition, growing out of the world's ignorance, prejudice, envy, etc. (2) Nevertheless it is best for us, as it was for Caleb, to have such an inheritance. Difficulties (*a*) try our faith and courage; (*b*) give scope for energy and devotion; (*c*) make the ultimate peace the more blessed. (3) Apply these truths (*a*) to private life; (*b*) to church work and the difficulties in evangelizing the world; (*c*) to public interests, and the hindrances which stay the progress of liberty, civilization, and national prosperity." — *W. F. Adeney.*

5. Many of the best promises are realized only in the course of time. Some things cannot be done in a moment. But with continued faithfulness the fulfilment is sure to come.

> "If only we strive to be pure and true,
> To each of us there will come an hour
> When the tree of life shall burst into flower,
> And rain at our feet the glorious dower
> Of something grander than ever we knew."

6. Faithfulness in early life reaps a large reward in later years. There is no greater mistake than to imagine that indolence, carelessness, "wild oats," in youth can lead to a successful life. "Whatsoever a man soweth THAT shall he also reap."

7. "The chief reward of Caleb did not consist in his getting possession, just before he died, of a tract of rough land, but in the consciousness of integrity, the delight of achievement, the esteem of his comrades, the approval of God." — *Professor Beecher.*

NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT. Following God with all the heart (Matt. 22: 37; Rom. 8: 16; 12: 1). Religion is best for this life as well as the next (Matt. 6: 33). Our inheritance (Rom. 8: 17; Matt. 7: 11; 1 Tim. 4: 8; Eph. 6: 3). The "Anakim" in our inheritance (Eph. 6: 12; 1 John 2: 15, 16; Luke 21: 34). The means of victory (1 John 5: 4; Rom. 8: 37–39).

LESSON V. — November 2.

CITIES OF REFUGE. — Joshua 20 : 1–9.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*** PSA. 46: 1.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Two lines of thought run through this lesson: —

1. One is the value of life, the crime of taking away life, God's gift; an interesting study of early customs as to the punishment of murder, and the ways in which the divine law modified these customs, and finally removed the evil from them.

2. The other is the use of the historical facts as a type and illustration of higher truths, for both the facts and the higher truths have the same principles underlying them.

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 1–4; Matt. 11: 28–30; Rom. 8: 1.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. About the time of the division of the land, B. C. 1445 or 1245.

Place. Shiloh, the religious capital of Israel for the whole period of the Judges. It was seventeen miles northwest of Jerusalem.

Joshua, about 90 years old, still at the head of the nation.

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The Map will make clear the reasons why these cities named were chosen for cities of refuge.

THE SECTION.

Josh. 20: 1–9; Num. 35: 11–34; Deut. 19: 2–13. Read also Psa. 46.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

Perhaps the record of what our English ancestors did in the direction of this lesson will bring the subject closer home than most books on the subject. See Green's *Short History of the English People*, and his *Making of England;* "Goel" in *Hastings' Bible Dictionary;* Bissell's *Law of Asylum in Israel.* Dr. Trumbull's *Blood Covenant*, pp. 258–263, and Appendix on blood-ransoming, give an interesting account of the Goel, or blood avenger; so also does Bush's *Illustrations of Scripture*, pp. 99–102. Livingston and Stanley on several occasions made payments, or had them made, to avoid a conflict on a question of blood; see *Travels in South Africa*, pp. 368–370, 390, 482; *The Congo*, I., pp. 520–527. Spurgeon's *Sermons*, series 3, "The Sinner's Refuge," is very effective. For illustrations of conscience, see Æschylus' *Tragedy of Orestes;* Scott's *Marmion;* Shakespeare's *Richard III.* and *Macbeth;* Hood's *Poems*, "Dream of Eugene Aram"; Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables.*

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

Subjects to be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

The avenger of blood.
The right of asylum.
The distinction between accidental and wilful murder.
The object of the cities of refuge.
How they avoided the evils of the times.
The fairness of the trial.
The avenger.
Christ our refuge.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: Christ our City of Refuge.

I. THE GOEL, AVENGING JUSTICE.
- Who and what he was.
- The threefold crime.
- The two methods of justice.
- The three dangers.
- Historical examples.

II. THE CITIES OF REFUGE (vs. 1, 2, 7, 8).
- The right of asylum.
- The cities chosen.
- Their fitting situation.

III. HOW THE CITIES OF REFUGE ACCOMPLISHED THEIR OBJECT (vs. 3–6, 9).
- For whom designed.
- He must go to the Refuge.
- Preliminary trial.
- Regular and impartial trial.
- The guilty delivered up.
- The innocent safe in the refuge.

IV. THE CITIES OF REFUGE AS A TYPE.
- The avenger.
- Christ the refuge.
- Comparisons.

I. **The Goel, avenging Justice.** — There are some crimes that must be removed if a nation would exist and prosper. Such are treason, which strikes at the life of the nation, and murder, which strikes at the existence of the family as well as of the individual. Breaking the sixth commandment wrongs not merely the individual. It is a threefold crime: 1. Against the individual. It takes away his most precious possession; everything so far as this world is concerned.

2. Against the family and the nation, for it takes away the support of the family, and one of the essential members and defenders of the nation.

3. Against God, the giver of life.

Hence the severest punishment possible is meted out to whoever perpetrates this crime, and ought to be, in order to prevent as many as possible from committing the crime. No other punishment is adequate. We pity the murderer for his suffering. We ought to have still more pity for the innocent victims. When there was no strong general government, but small tribes with no authority over them to appeal to, these tribes, or the relatives of the murdered person, were compelled themselves to punish the murderer, who was naturally, in most cases, the member of another tribe. There was no one else to do it.

THE GOEL, translated here "avenger of blood," and in Ruth "kinsman," next of kin, because it was the duty of the next of kin to perform the duties of the *goel*, is really the vindicator, one "whose duty it was to secure justice to the injured," "to restore the violated family integrity," one "who is authorized to obtain blood for blood as an act of justice," "the balancing of a blood account." In civil cases the *goel* was the one to redeem property which his brother had sold, or the person of his brother who had been sold into

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slavery for debt. Compare the case of Ruth and Boaz, and the purchase of property by Jeremiah (Jer. 32: 8–12). In criminal law the *goel*, "the next of kin had laid upon him the duty of enforcing the claim for satisfaction of a murdered kinsman." His duty was justice rather than revenge. "In the case of loss of life he had the responsibility of securing to the family an equivalent of that loss, by other blood, or by an agreed payment for its value." See Trumbull's *Blood Covenant*, pp. 259–263 and Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, Art. "Goel."

THE TWO METHODS OF JUSTICE. "All through the East there are regular fixed tariffs for blood cancelling. Throughout Arabia and Syria, and in various parts of Africa, the first question to be considered in any case of unlawful blood shedding is, whether the loss of life shall be restored or balanced by blood, or by some equivalent of blood. Though it is true, still, in some instances all money payment for blood is refused; but the avowed motive in such a case is the holding of life as above price — the very idea which the Mosaic law emphasized. Thus Burton tells of the excited Bedaween mother who dashes the proffered blood-money to the ground, swearing by Allah that she will not eat her son's blood." — *H. C. Trumbull*, in *Pilgrimage to Mecca*. Among the Hebrews no money, as among Bedouins and Arabs, and as allowed by the Romans, could buy off the wilful murderer (Num. 35: 31, 32). Thus the Jewish law showed a just regard for human life and put the poor on the same footing as the rich. No pity, no money, could shelter the murderer; so only "would it be well with them."

THE THREE DANGERS. This primitive method of justice exposed the people to three great dangers: —

1. There was the danger of making it an instrument of private revenge.

2. There was danger of long, bloody feuds, revenges, continued enmity, and almost extermination. "Among the Arab tribes of the present day 'any bloodshed whatever, whether wilful or accidental, laid the homicide open to the *duleous* revenge of the relatives and family of the slain person, who again in their turn were then similarly watched and hunted by the opposite party, until a family war of extermination had legally settled itself from generation to generation, without the least prospect of a peaceful termination.'" — *Cambridge Bible*.

3. There was danger of great injustice by not making a distinction between criminality and carelessness; between deliberate murder and accidental homicide.

HISTORICAL EXAMPLES. Similar customs obtain in Persia, Abyssinia, and among the Druses and Circassians, as also they obtained among the Hindus and the ancient Germans and Anglo-Saxons, our English ancestors. "Under the Eastern idea of the responsibility of a whole family or clan for the act of any of its members, the Arab avenger hesitates not to slay the kinsman of the murderer. Hence have arisen those blood-feuds which are the curse of Arabia, and which, in Europe, still linger in the vendetta of Corsica and Sicily." — *Canon Tristram*.

"A member of the consular service at Beyrout was out shooting with several companions in northern Syria. One of the party fired in a certain direction at a partridge. Immediately a loud cry was heard. A man at work behind a knoll had received a few spent pellets of lead from the shot, which only just drew blood. On seeing what had happened, my friend, knowing the ways of the people, counseled immediate flight ere the natives should gather in response to the screams of the injured man. This accordingly they did, and speedily reaching their horses were able to make their escape. But not a moment too soon, for a crowd came together with amazing rapidity, and wildly gesticulating, with fierce yells pursued the fugitives until pursuit was hopeless. The man who has no relative to take up his case may fall unavenged, but the kinsman who refuses to take vengeance for the injured is branded with disgrace." — *William Ewing* in *S. S. Times*.

"In Ireland, for instance, it is not so long ago since one of these blood-feuds in the County Tipperary had acquired such formidable proportions that the authorities of the Roman Catholic Church there were compelled to resort to a mission in order to put an end to it. A man had been killed nearly a century before in an affray which commenced about the age of a colt. His relatives felt bound to avenge the murder, and their vengeance was again deemed to require fresh vengeance, until faction fights had grown almost into petty wars. A thrilling story written by the late Prosper Mérimée turns upon the Corsican *vendetta*, and so true is this story to life that in the very year (1879) in which these words were written an occurrence precisely similar, save in its termination, was reported in the daily journals to have taken place in that island. The only way in which the feud could be terminated was by summoning the representatives of the two families before the authorities and exacting an oath from them that they would cease their strife." — *Pulpit Commentary*.

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1. The LORD also / And the LORD spake unto Jŏsh'u-a, saying,
2. Speak to the children of Is'ra-el, saying, [1] Appoint out for you / Assign you the cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Mō'ses:
3. That the slayer / that the manslayer that killeth any / any person unawares *and* unwittingly / unwittingly *and* unawares may flee thither: and they shall be unto you / your for a refuge from the avenger of blood.

[1] Ex. 21: 13; Num. 35: 6, 11, 14; Deut. 19: 2, 9.

II. The Cities of Refuge.—Vs. 1, 2, 7, 8. **2. Appoint out for you** (R. V., "Assign you the") **cities of refuge.** Under the circumstances described above, it was necessary that there should be places of asylum, where one who had unintentionally killed another could be safe from the avenger, and where any one could have a fair trial. **Whereof I spake unto you by the hand** (the agency) **of Moses.** See Num. 35: 9–34; Deut. 19: 1–3, where may be found a more detailed account of the object of these cities.



Knocker on One of the Doors of Durham Cathedral.

THE RIGHT OF ASYLUM. "Among the ancient heathen this *jus asyli*, or right of shelter and impunity, was enjoyed by certain places reputed sacred, such as groves, temples, and altars." These were so carefully guarded that not even a bird could be molested in these sacred precincts. A man has been reported to have been slain for killing a bird in a place of refuge. "Among the Greeks and Romans the number of these places became in process of time very great, and led, by abuse, to a fresh increase of criminals."—*J. R. Beard.* "The mediæval church recognized the same necessity in a similar state of society, and granted what is known as the right of 'sanctuary' to many of the most sacred shrines in every country in Europe. Practically, the right of sanctuary was claimed for any accused person who succeeded in reaching the altar of a church. Canterbury and Durham were two of the most celebrated sanctuaries in England, as containing the shrines of St. Thomas à Becket and St. Cuthbert. On the chief door of Durham Cathedral still remains the great bronze knocker, which, if any fugitive should touch, he was entitled to protection and maintenance for thirty-seven days, until his case could be investigated. This right of sanctuary, before the Reformation, had become much abused."—*Canon Tristram.* "Among the Jews the cities of refuge bore some resemblance to the asylum of the classic nations, but were happily exempt from the evil consequences to which reference has been made."—*J. R. Beard.*

THE CITIES CHOSEN. "There were six cities appointed for this purpose, three on either side of the Jordan, almost equally remote from each other.

(*a*) ON THE WEST.	(*b*) ON THE EAST.
1. *Kedesh*, in Naphtali, in the north.	1. *Golan*, in Bashan, north.
2. *Shechem*, in Mount Ephraim, in the center.	2. *Ramoth-Gilead*, in Gad, center.
3. *Hebron*, in Judah, in the south.	3. *Bezer*, in Reuben, south.

It requires only to look at the map to see how wisely these spots were marked out, so as to make a city of refuge easy of access from all parts of the land. They were chosen, it will be observed, out of the priestly and Levitical cities, as likely to be inhabited by the most intelligent part of the community."—*Cambridge Bible.*

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4. And when he that doth he shall flee unto one of those cities, and shall stand at the entering of [1] the gate of the city, and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city; and they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them.

5. [2] And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall not deliver up the manslayer the slayer up into his hand; because he smote his neighbour unawares, unwittingly, and hated him not beforetime.

6. And he shall dwell in that city, [3] until he stand before the congregation for judgement, and judgment, until the death of the high priest that shall be in those days: then shall the manslayer slayer return, and come unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled.

7. And they appointed set apart [4] Kĕ'desh in Găl'ĭ-lēe in the hill country of mount Năph'ta-lī, and [5] Shĕ'chem in the hill country of mount E'phră-ĭm, and [6] Kir'jath-ar'ba, which is He'bron, Kir'i-ath-ar'ba (the same is He'bron) in [7] the mountain hill country of Jū'dah.

8. And on the other side beyond the Jor'dan by at Jĕr'ĭ-chō eastward, they assigned [8] Bē'zer in the wilderness upon in the plain out of the tribe of Reu'ben, and [9] Rā'moth in Gĭl'e-ăd out of the tribe of Găd, and [10] Gō'lan in Bā'shăn out of the tribe of Ma-năs'seh.

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[1] Ruth 4: 1, 2.
[2] Num. 35: 12.
[3] Num. 35: 12, 25.
[4] Josh. 21: 32; 1 Chron. 6: 76.
[5] Josh. 21: 21; 2 Chron. 10: 1.
[6] Josh. 14: 15; 21: 11, 13.
[7] Luke 1: 39.
[8] Deut. 4: 43; Josh. 21: 36; 1 Chron. 6: 78.
[9] Josh. 21: 38.
[10] Josh. 21: 27.

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7. **Kedesh in Galilee in mount**, better, "the hill country," the mountainous region of **Naphtali**, in the extreme north, west of the waters of Merom. **Shechem**, the central city of Samaria, between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, a place well known in Bible history. Abraham and Jacob lived there for a time; Joseph's brethren fed their flocks in its vicinity; Joseph's body was buried there; Joshua assembled the people there for his farewell address; the Israelites had their conference with King Rehoboam there; and later Jesus had his well-known conversation there with the woman of Samaria. **Mount.** Hill country. **Hebron.** Twenty miles south of Jerusalem.

8. **Bezer.** The most southerly of the cities of refuge east of the Jordan, twelve miles northeast of Heshbon. **In the wilderness.** A wild, uncultivated, but not uninhabited region. **Ramoth in Gilead** (heights of Gilead). One of the great fortresses east of the Jordan, twenty-five miles from the river, and thirteen miles south of the Jabbok, in the tribe of Gad. **Gilead.** The mountainous region east of the Jordan, extending some sixty miles from the Dead Sea to the Lake of Galilee. Bounded on the east by the Arabian plateau, and on the west by the Jordan. **Golan** "was the most northerly city chosen on the east of the Jordan. Its very site is now unknown, though once a place of great power and influence, which gave its name to a province *Gaulanitis*, east of Galilee." — *Cambridge Bible*. **Bashan.** A region east of the Sea of Galilee and the northern Jordan, extending north to Mount Hermon.

NOTE. Not only was the situation of these cities such as to present the easiest access from all parts of the country, but roads were to be built to them (Deut. 19: 3). "According to the Rabbins, in order to give the fugitive all possible advantage in his flight, it was the business of the Sanhedrim to make the roads that led to the cities of refuge convenient, by enlarging them and removing every obstruction that might hurt his foot or hinder his speed. No hillock was left, no river was allowed over which there was not a bridge. At every turning there were to be posts erected bearing the words, *Refuge, Refuge*, to guide the unhappy man in his flight, and two students in the law were appointed to accompany him, that, if the avenger should overtake him before he reached the city, they might attempt to pacify him till the legal investigation could take place." — *J. R. Beard.*

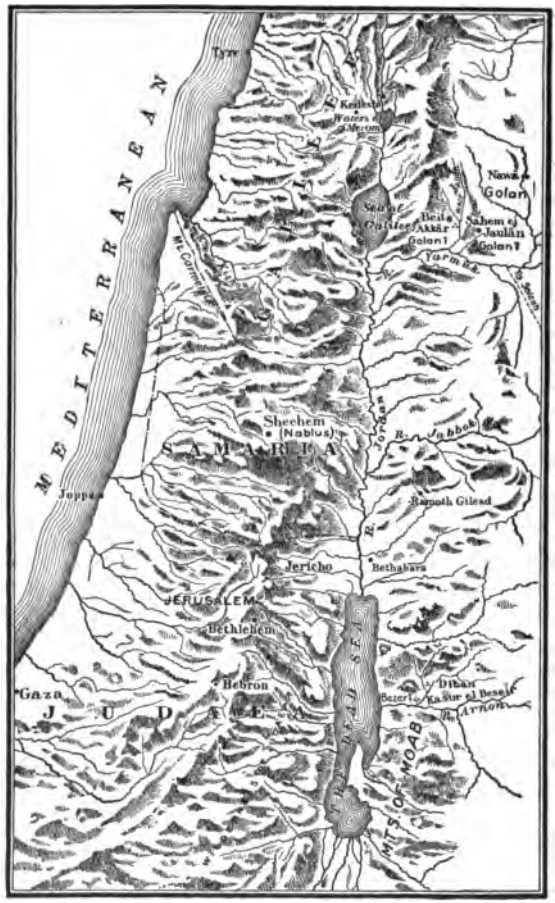
III. **How the Cities of Refuge accomplished their Object.** — Vs. 3–6, 9. FIRST. The persons for whom they were set apart were only those who killed **any person unawares and unwittingly.** Literally, "by error, without knowing," by some mistake of judgment, or accidental blow, without intending to injure. **They shall be your refuge,** the refuge for all the nation. Not only did the slayer need protection, but

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the nation needed to be defended from violence and crime, and from doing wrong to persons who were not at heart guilty of crime. It is worse to commit a crime than to suffer from it.

Mention of different cases is made, as slaying another, not seeking his harm (Num. 35: 23); when no dangerous weapon, indicating design to injure, was used (Num. 35: 16, 17, 18, compare vs. 22–24); accident (Ex. 21: 13); sudden collision (Num. 35: 22); something thrown upon a man without seeing him (Num. 35: 23), as an ax head slipping from its handle (Deut. 19: 5).

But he who committed wilful, deliberate murder met with no compassion from the Mosaic Code. He was regarded as accursed. The horns of the altar were to be no refuge for him. He was to be dragged from them by force to suffer his doom, nor could rank or wealth exempt him from it (Num. 35: 31, 32).



Map showing Locations of the Cities of Refuge.

SECOND. **4. Flee unto one of those cities.** The one who had killed another must flee to a city of refuge. In no other place was he safe. If he refused to go, the blood was on his own head. There was probably some way of giving notice to the authorities within the city, day and night, as in the sanctuary of Durham Cathedral described above, so that no time would be lost in receiving the fugitive.

THIRD. The preliminary trial something like our grand jury trials. **Shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city,** *i. e.*, not outside of the gate of the city, but in the forum, or public square which was near the city gates, and used as a place for public meetings and trials (compare Ruth 4: 1, 2). "Whoever reaches one of these cities is entitled to trial. So says this verse and Num. 35: 12, 24. Many details are given, and it is instructive to study them. The mode of procedure was very enlightened, even when tested by the highest standards that men have yet reached. . . . This amounts to his giving himself up, and standing committed for trial." — *Professor Beecher*. **Shall declare his cause,** state his case, declare what he has done and why he has had to flee from home. It was uncertain whether he was a criminal, or one who had a right to claim asylum from his pursuers. In either case **they,** the elders, the rulers, **shall take him into the city,** receive him, care for him, and assign him a dwelling-place, as he probably left home suddenly without preparation for a prolonged stay. If no accuser came, he was safe as long as he remained in the city.

FOURTH. A regular and fair trial. **5. If the avenger of blood pursue after him,** as it was his duty to do if he believed the man to be a murderer, **they shall not deliver**

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9. [1] These were the cities appointed appointed cities for all the children of Is'ra-el, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them, that whosoever killeth any person at unawares unwittingly might flee thither, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, [2] until he stood before the congregation.

[1] Num. 35: 15. [2] V. 6.

the slayer up into his hand, because on the face of it **he smote his neighbour unwittingly**, and should have a fair trial before the avenger of blood could punish him.

6. Until he stand. "The judges and elders of the people, in trying civil and criminal causes, always sat; the person who came for judgment, or who was tried, always stood." — *Bush.* **Before the congregation.** The rulers and representatives of the city, who are frequently spoken of as if they were the body of the people (compare Josh. 24: 1 and 24: 2, 19, 21). **For judgment,** for a just trial and decision. "Much stress is laid on the previous conduct of the slayer, and the relations between him and his victim, whether he lay in wait for the slain man (Deut. 19: 11), whether he "hunted" for him or not (Ex. 21: 13; Num. 35: 20, 22), whether he smote him "in secret" (Deut. 27: 24). Was the deed presumptuous, — that is to say, malicious? (Ex. 21: 14.) Was it with guile? (Josh. 21: 14.) Especially, was there enmity previously between the two men? (Num. 35: 21, 22.) Was there hatred of the slain on the part of the slayer? (Num. 35: 20, 23; Deut. 19: 4, 6, 11; Josh. 20: 5.) The fact that so many particulars are enumerated shows that the trial contemplated was to be a careful one." — *Professor Beecher* in *S. S. Times.* A strong bar against the license of private revenge was placed by the provision which required the concurrence of at least two witnesses in any capital question (Num. 35: 30; Deut. 17: 6–8; 19: 15). Witnesses were restrained from falsehood by the just requirement that they should be punished, if guilty of perjury, by the same punishment which would have fallen, had their testimony proved acceptable, upon the person against whom they testified (Deut. 19: 16–21). Witnesses were further restrained from untruth in capital cases by the requirement that, if the prisoner were condemned to die, they should throw the first stones, thus bringing to them the horror of committing actual murder by false testimony (Deut. 17: 7; John 8: 7). This requirement was probably operative only in those cases where the avenger of blood did not become the executioner.

FIFTH. If the fugitive was found guilty of wilful murder he was delivered over to the executioner. He was no longer entitled to safety either in the city or out of it. Thus the great danger that the right of asylum should be abused, and bad men take advantage of it to escape punishment, and thus make such places hot-beds of crime, was removed. The surer the punishment, the exacter the justice, the fewer the criminals. The object of this distinction is to save the innocent, while making him pay the penalty of his carelessness, and yet in no way to lessen the feeling of the guilt of murder. There is no price that can pay for human life. It is most sacred, and nothing but at least high penalty and cost on the part of the criminal can be just, or can stem the tide of murderous crime.

SIXTH. If he was exonerated from wilful murder, he was safe, but only so long as he remained within the city and its suburbs of one thousand cubits beyond the walls (Num. 35; 26–28). He must remain here, away from his home and business, till the death of the high priest. This seeming hardship was necessary and just, because there is usually some fault of passion or carelessness in even accidental murders, and this great inconvenience would tend to carefulness and safety. There is often real guilt in carelessness, and innocent persons should be protected from its effects. A late paper comments on accidents from parents allowing little children to have dangerous toys. No one is excused for pointing a gun at another because he thinks it is not loaded. **Until the death of the high priest.** There ought to be some limit to this exile, and this change of administration would be certainly as good as any.

IV. **The Cities of Refuge as a Type.** — 1. THE AVENGER. "Who is the avenger? Law. What law? Criminal law, sanitary law, social law, natural law. . . . Wherever want stares, and vice reigns, and rags rot, there the avenger takes his stand. Delay him not. He is the messenger of Christ. The very nature of things is God's avenger." — *Professor Drummond* in *The Programme of Christianity.* Conscience, the law of God in the soul, is an avenger. All these are made clearer and truer by the statement of the work of the Goel, the avenger of blood, as given above. It is not revenge, but justice and righteousness, through punishment.

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"My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale,
And every tale condemns me for a villain." — *Shakespeare.*

ILLUSTRATION. "Pain is, so far as I know, the only protest in the human constitution against something which is wrong. It is the one protestant movement in the body-politic of man's organism, the only thing which raises its voice against existing abuses. . . . It indicates danger on the line. Without it the danger would be equally great, but not equally remedial. It is the declaration that our health is bad, or, at the least, that something is required to perfect our constitution. Hunger is the protest of the physical nature against further abstinence; lassitude is the protest of the mental nature against further work. . . . It is the function of conscience to tell the mind what it is the function of headache to tell the body — that disease is not a normal thing, and therefore not a permanent thing. As long as disease lasts, physical or mental, it is desirable that pain should last. Disease without pain is disease without protest — hurrying down a steep place into the sea." — *George Matheson, D.D.*

ILLUSTRATIONS. Compare Lady Macbeth walking in her sleep. "All the perfumes of Arabia cannot sweeten this little hand." Shakespeare represents Richard III. as seeing a vision in his sleep just before his last battle, in which appear the ghosts of those whom he had murdered. One by one they come, rehearse the crimes he had committed upon them, and cry, "Despair and die. Let me sit heavy on thy soul to-morrow."

"Conscience is a thousand swords." — *Richard III.*

The Roman poet, Persius, who died in A. D. 62, about thirty years after Herod's murder of John, describes in one of his satires (V., 180–188) the effect of superstitious fear in marring all the pleasures of the pride of luxurious pomp, and chooses for his illustration the experience of Herod. He describes him on the recurrence of his birthday feast as startled, like Macbeth, at the vision of Banquo's ghost at his feast. In the tunny fish, in a red porcelain dish, he sees the specter of the head of the dead prophet in the charger brought by Herodias' daughter, the harbinger of coming ill. — *Condensed from Plumptre.*

LIBRARY. Browning's *Poems*, "Pippa Passes." "I know no poem since *Macbeth* that so portrays the agony of an awakened conscience." — *President Stanley Hall* in *A Study of Fears.* Hawthorne's *Mosses from an Old Manse*, vol. II., "The Bosom Serpent," where the chief character continually exclaims, "It gnaws me." Hood's *Poems*, "Eugene Aram." The poem "I Sat Alone with My Conscience," in *Suggestive Illustrations* on John.

2. CHRIST IS THE CITY OF REFUGE. "It is not the church, it is not the altar; it is Christ himself who is the one and only sacrifice for sin, and therefore the one and only hiding-place to which the sinner can repair. In no place, person, or thing — in no buildings, sacrifices, or rites — is there any refuge for the guilty, save the atonement of the cross; but there such a refuge is provided as will meet the case of sinners of every class, not excepting the wilful murderer himself." — *T. Smith.*

Christ is the city of refuge because God has so appointed. To go to him involves repentance of sin, forsaking of sin, the choice of God and goodness as our portion, a new heart, and a new nature of love. It brings us within every heavenly power that can save from sin, every high motive, the presence of the Holy Spirit. Christ is not an arbitrary, but a necessary city of refuge from sin.

3. The wilful and deliberate sinner has no place in this refuge so long as he continues in that state of mind. He must be delivered to the avenger to lead him to repentance, or to punish him if he refuses to repent.

4. "God has done all he can to aid and draw men to Jesus. Now, beloved, I think this is a picture of the road to Christ Jesus. It is no roundabout road of the law; it is no obeying this, that, and the other; it is a straight road: "Believe and live." It is a road so hard that no self-righteous man can ever tread it; but it is a road so easy that every sinner who knows himself to be a sinner might by it find his way to Christ and heaven. And lest they should be mistaken, God has sent me and my brethren in the ministry to be like hand posts in the way, to point poor sinners to Jesus; and we desire ever to have on our lips the cry, '*Refuge*, refuge, refuge.' Sinner, that is the way; walk therein, and be thou saved." — *Spurgeon.*

5. "And once in *this* city of refuge, the refugee must never leave it, but must make it his abiding home. For our high priest never dies. He died unto sin once; but he now

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lives unto God forever. All, then, who repair to him must dwell in him continually; and, indeed, if they are right-minded, they will have no desire to forsake him for a moment." — *T. Smith.*

6. Christ is made as easy of access as possible. He is everywhere present. The conditions of salvation are as simple and easy as it is possible to make them. Sabbaths, churches, meetings, invitations from Christians, bring Christ as near as possible to every soul.

LESSON VI. — November 9.

JOSHUA'S PARTING ADVICE. — Joshua 24: 14-25.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***Choose you this day whom ye will serve.*** — JOSH. 24: 15.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

We need first to take a glance at the last eighteen years of Joshua's life, and note what progress was made toward the settlement of the nation.

We now come to the close of the first epoch of the nation's life in their new home, which had lasted for about a quarter of a century.

There is something very touching, very worthy of earnest attention in the dying words of a great man of large experience and true piety, and it is to these we are to listen to-day.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. According to the chronology in the margins of our Bibles it was about B. C. 1426, eighteen years after our last lesson and twenty-five years after the crossing of the Jordan into the Promised Land.

Place. The religious capital was still at Shiloh, six miles northwest of Jerusalem; but the great assembly for renewing the covenant was at Shechem, between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim.

Joshua was nearly one hundred and ten years old, living at Timnath Serah, not far from Shechem.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

The *Commentaries* and *books on Joshua.* Good illustrations are found in Abbott's *Cyrus the Great*, "The Two Feasts," and Prescott's *Conquest of Peru*, I: 263, on Pizarro's choice. Also an effective illustration of parting advice is found in Mrs. Sewall's *Ballads*, "Mother's Last Words." Some very strong words on the example of public men are found in Wendell Phillips' *Speeches*, "Idols"; and in Webster's Speech on "Bunker Hill Monument," concerning the training value of monu-

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 14, 15; 1 Kings 18: 21; Matt. 6: 24; Deut. 26: 17.

THE SECTION

includes Josh. 22-24, compared with — the covenant on Mounts Ebal and Gerizim twenty-five years before (Josh. 8: 30-35; Deut. 27: 1-10); the covenant at Mount Sinai (Ex. 19: 1-25); the covenant in the plains of Moab (Deut. 29: 1, including Deut. 27-30); Elijah at Carmel (1 Kings 18: 19-39).

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

Subjects to be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

A general view of the quarter century.
Shechem as the place for the assembly.
The past as a motive.
Reasons for the people's decision.
Against what attractions.
Witnesses against themselves.
Value of a covenant, of a memorial monument.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: The Decisive Choice.

I. A GLANCE OVER THE FIRST QUARTER OF A CENTURY.
   Seven years of warfare.
   The return of the Eastern tribes.
   A schism averted.
   Eighteen years of rest.

II. THE ASSEMBLY AT SHECHEM.

III. JOSHUA'S FAREWELL ADDRESS (vs. 14-21).
   FIRST. A review of the past. Ten wonders God had wrought for them.
   SECOND. A call for a decisive stand (vs. 14, 15).
   THIRD. The people decide for God (vs. 16-18).
   FOURTH. Warning and appeal (vs. 19, 20).
   FIFTH. The people reiterate their decision (v. 21).

IV. THREE WITNESSES TO THEIR PROMISE (vs. 22-25).
   1. Themselves
   2. A public written covenant.
   3. A great memorial stone.

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ments. The tract *Which Side of the Line;* the story in Foster's *Cyclopedia of Illustrations*, No. 7108, of a young lady who wrote out (1) Reasons why I should serve the world; (2) Reasons why I should serve the Lord; and in view of the result decided for Christ; Lowell's *Poems*, "The Present Crisis."

I. **A Glance over the First Quarter of a Century.** — SEVEN YEARS OF WARFARE. The conquest of the country took nearly seven years, not of uninterrupted warfare, but of wars intermingled with cultivating the fields and making homes and becoming citizens. Recall the events of the previous lessons.

THE RETURN OF THE EASTERN SOLDIERS belonging to the two and a half tribes which settled east of the Jordan. They had doubtless individually returned to visit their families, or been relieved by other detachments. Now as an army they returned home with great riches and spoils. On reaching home they were to divide their gains with those who remained at home. So David, four hundred years later, gave those who remained to guard the baggage an equal share with those who fought the battle. Those who deny themselves to support ministers and missionaries are entitled to partake of the reward of their labors and shall, with those "who turn many unto righteousness," "shine as the brightness of the firmament and as the stars forever and ever." It is necessary that some should "abide by the stuff"; should carry on the business of the world, and do its work; and if they are devoted heart and soul to the Lord, and gather in order that they may sustain the soldiers of the cross in the field, both together shall sing the songs and wear the crowns of victory.

A SCHISM AVERTED. After the return of the soldiers the tribes east of the Jordan built an altar for themselves. The other tribes, hearing of this, thought that they were planning another religious center, so that there would come in time to be practically two nations instead of one; and that they were intending not to come up to the tabernacle at Shiloh. It seemed like a tendency to idolatry and rebellion. They were both indignant and afraid that the vials of the divine wrath would be poured out upon them even more severely than when Achan's sin involved the whole nation in disaster. A delegation was sent over the river, who charged their brethren with daring rebellion, with disgracing the nation, with bringing down divine judgments on all the people. The natural effect of this unjust charge and sharp reprimand would be to arouse the Eastern tribes to anger. "Scolding does not make men sorry for their sins." "Man was not made to live by snapping turtle alone," as a late writer has said. But they showed that their rash zeal without knowledge was sincere and unselfish by offering to give up a part of their own possessions, and welcome the two and a half tribes to a home on their side of Jordan.

This kind proposal mollified the wrath that the indignant words tended to kindle. "A soft answer turned away wrath." The accused kindly explained their motives and purposes, denied the charges, and the whole difficulty was settled peacefully and satisfactorily. "But who can estimate all the misery that has come in almost every age, in circles both public and private, from hasty suspicions of evil, which a little patience, a little inquiry, a little opportunity of explanation, might have at once averted? History, tradition, fiction alike, furnish us with instances. We recall the story of Llewellyn and his dog Gelert, stabbed by his master, who thought the stains upon his mouth were the blood of his beloved child. We remember the tragedy of Othello and Desdemona; we see how the fondest love may be poisoned by hasty suspicion, and the dearest of wives murdered, when a little patience would have shown her innocent." — *Professor Blaikie.*

EIGHTEEN YEARS OF REST. Although the Canaanites were not wholly exterminated (Josh. 23: 12; Judg. 2: 2, 3), yet the war was practically ended, and the people gave themselves to the positive work of settling down as prosperous citizens of the Promised Land (Josh. 21: 43–45).

II. **The Assembly at Shechem.** — The last two chapters of Joshua are either two different reports of the same address, as represented in the Polychrome Bible; or they are two similar addresses on the same great occasion to different audiences, the first to a mass meeting of the people, and the second to the officers and judges of all the tribes assembled at Shechem, probably on the sloping sides of Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, where they had gathered twenty-five years before, on their first entrance into the Promised Land, and made the most solemn promises to God. Joshua had been watching the tendencies of the times, and knew well the character of his people, and the peculiar dangers to which they would be exposed. Therefore he determined to make, before he died, one more appeal to them, under the most solemn circumstances possible.

No circumstances could be more impressive, as, amid these hallowed associations and memories, the white-haired, beloved leader, saintly in character, and touched with the light

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14. [1] Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in [2] sincerity and in truth: and [3] put away the gods which your fathers served [on the other side of the flood, the River,] and [4] in E'gypt; and serve ye the LORD.

[1] Deut. 10: 12.
[2] Gen. 17: 1; Psa. 119: 1; 2 Cor. 1: 12.
[3] Vs. 2, 23; Lev. 17: 7.
[4] Ezek. 20: 7.

of a near eternity, arose and made his dying appeal, something as the Apostle John, when very old, went feebly about among the disciples, saying continually, Little children, love one another. In this place all the assembled multitudes could see and hear him. For the air is so clear that a "single voice can be heard by many thousands."

III. **Joshua's Farewell Address.** — Vs. 14–21. FIRST. A REVIEW OF THE PAST AS A MOTIVE FOR THE PRESENT (vs. 1–13). 1. God's call to Abraham from idolatry, and his guiding care over him.

2. God's dealings with the patriarchs, and their discipline in Egypt.
3. The signs and wonders God wrought against Pharaoh in order to deliver his people.
4. The marvelous deliverance through the Red Sea.
5. Victory over the Amorites.
6. Balaam's curse changed into a blessing.
7. The crossing of Jordan at flood-tide.
8. The capture of Jericho.
9. Many victories.
10. The strange victory over two kings of the Amorites, "not with thy sword, nor with thy bow," but with hornets.

"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands twice told over."

God has many ways of accomplishing his ends. One was by these insects. As an illustration of what can be done by hornets, we have the account of Sir Dighton Probyn, commander of a celebrated regiment during the Sepoy mutiny in India, sending out his troopers to scour the woods, to learn the position of the enemy. From his position on high ground he noticed that a panic had set in, and the men were spurring their horses in hurried retreat. He thought the enemy was upon them in large force. But in fact they were attacked by clouds of wasps and hornets, and these defeated one of the very best of the British regiments. See note in Harper's *Bible and Modern Discovery*, p. 528.

NOTE 1. The lamp of the past is the best light on the present. We know what God will do by what he has done. David's victory over the lion and the bear gave him hope of victory over the giant Goliath of Goth. Every victory over Christ's enemies is the assurance of his final triumph.

NOTE 2. This review was an appeal to gratitude and love. Everything they possessed was God's gift to them. God had abounded in expressions of his peculiar care over them. Therefore the least they could do in return was to love and obey the Giver of all. Compare the poem of "The Two Baskets" in *Suggestive Illustrations* on Acts, p. 85.

SECOND. A CALL FOR A FULL, MANLY, DECISIVE STAND ON THE LORD'S SIDE (vs. 14, 15). **14. Now therefore,** in view of these facts, **fear the Lord.** Not be in terror before him, nor driven from him by fright, but hold him in reverential awe and respect, realize his power to help and to punish, so as to devote yourselves to him in perfect trust. There can be no trifling. **Serve him in sincerity and in truth.** Not in outward forms merely, but also in the heart and the life (John 4: 23, 24), and not with a secret regard for images, but giving him a worship spiritual and real. *Sincerity* is derived from *sine cera*, "without wax," *i. e.*, pure, clear honey. Sincerity is therefore freedom from all wrong motives or feelings, from hypocrisy or pretense. The idea, says Professor Beecher, is rather of wholeness, integrity, than sincerity. Serve God completely, to the utmost. **Put away the gods which your fathers served.** We thus learn that idolatry lurked among the Israelites, and that it was that form of idolatry which had been known in the family of Terah of old (v. 2). **On the other side of the flood,** *i. e.*, of the river Euphrates, whence Abraham came. **And serve ye the Lord.** The real object of Joshua was to renew and confirm the covenant which had already been made with God. They should serve God by worship, by obedience, by trust, by removing all remnants of idolatry, by offerings in support of religion and education, by a pure, noble, generous, loving life.

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15. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, [1] choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether [2] the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, were beyond the River, or [3] the gods of the Am'or-ites, in whose land ye dwell: [4] but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

[1] Ruth 1: 15; John 6: 67.
[2] V. 14.
[3] Ex. 23: 24; Deut. 13: 7.
[4] Gen. 18: 19.

15. **If it seem evil unto you.** If, having weighed all the reasons, you still think it wise and good to serve other gods, then **choose you this day**, now, on the spot. You have had time enough to consider. Every motive for a choice at all is a motive for deciding at once. Compare the message to the church in Laodicea in Revelation: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth." **Whom ye will serve.** Be decided. Cease to "halt between two opinions," to be "everything by turns, and nothing long." They had been harboring idols (v. 23), and worshiping them in secret, while openly professing to serve God. It was high time for this to cease, for it was practically deciding for idols. The whole hope and prosperity of the nation depended upon a whole-hearted service of Jehovah. So still the gospel demands that we decide at once (2 Cor. 6: 2). **The gods which your fathers served** in Chaldea. What had these done for them? Their ancestors had rejected these gods as unworthy. **The gods of the Amorites,** who had been unable to protect their worshipers from being destroyed by the Israelites. It would be absurd to turn from Jehovah to them. **As for me and my house** (household), **we will serve the Lord,** even if we stand alone. The decision was worthy of the grand old man.

THE REASONS WEIGHED.

1. God was invisible, and on that account could be everywhere present. He proved his existence by what he had done, as the flash of lightning reveals the existence of an unseen electric power in the clouds, or a shock by touching a live wire proves the reality of the unseen current flowing through it.

2. The prosperity of virtue and obedience, and their delights, though not so intense as the pleasures of idolatry, were long continued, and insured a happy and prosperous life for many years.

3. The restraints required were those which were necessary to a prosperous and peaceful life.

4. Gratitude, love, and duty, all combined to influence them to the choice of the true God. No idol had ever done or pretended to do what God had done for his people.

5. They were being trained as in a school to be a blessing to the whole world, to do more for the world than all the surrounding nations together had done or could do.

6. All the influence of Joshua's example, enforced by his experience, his success, his character, his good judgment, was thrown upon the side of right. The force of example is in proportion to the character of the person, and the respect in which he is held.

1. It was very difficult for the people to realize the existence and presence and power of an invisible God. It is difficult even to-day. But the idols and temples were everywhere manifest. The people could see them, and witness the gorgeous pomp of their ceremonials.

2. The idolatrous worship presented many attractions to such a people as the Israelites were at this time. There was a peculiar fascination attached to a worship where licentiousness was a part of the religion.

3. The social attractions of the Canaanitish people were very great. They were worldly prosperous, free from moral restraints. Their fashions and wealth were new and presented no small fascinations to a people brought up in the wilderness, and under much moral restraint. A story is more attractive to a school-boy than the hard lessons he must learn, the value and pleasures of which he cannot then understand.

ILLUSTRATION. When Cyrus the Great desired to enlist the Persian warriors to join in his plans, he assembled the army on a certain day and place, and provided each with an axe. He marched them into the forest, and made them toil all day in cutting down trees, with coarse food and little rest. The next day he brought them to a great banquet, with abundant meat and rich wines in profusion, and bid them feast and be merry. They enjoyed it all the more after the hard fare of the previous day, and joined in merry songs

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16. And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods;

17. For the LORD our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers up out of the land of E'gypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through the midst of whom we passed:

18. And the LORD drave out from before us all the people, even the Am'or-ites which dwelt in the land: therefore will we also will serve the LORD; for he is our God.

19. And Jŏsh'u-a said unto the people, [1] Ye cannot serve the LORD; for he is an [2] holy God; he is [3] a jealous God; [4] he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

[1] Matt. 6: 24.
[2] Lev. 19: 2; Psa. 99: 5, 9.
[3] Ex. 20: 5.
[4] Ex. 23: 21.

and tales and dances. At evening Cyrus called them together, and asked which service they liked best. Then he said to them, "If you follow me, you will enjoy ease, abundance, and luxury. If you refuse, you must toil on in privations and hardships as you do now, and so end your days." — *Condensed from Abbott's Cyrus the Great.*

THIRD. THE PEOPLE DECIDE FOR GOD (vs. 16–18). God wants a free, deliberate choice, without compulsion. The people were free to choose. **16. God forbid.** "The form of the Hebrew is 'A profane thing be it to us!' To translate this Hebrew exclamation by an English oath, as our versions regularly do, savors somewhat of the taking of the divine name in vain. The phrase states a reason for their choice. The forsaking of Jehovah strikes them as something horrible and profane and shocking." — *Professor Beecher.* **That we should forsake the Lord.** The people decided, and sincerely, to serve God. It was made under an appeal, under the power of the strongest and best motives that could be brought to bear upon them, when their minds were uplifted into clearest vision, above the smoke and clouds of earth. That was the right time to make a decision. God has given us feelings on purpose to move us to decide aright. Joshua did everything possible to confirm their decision and to render it enduring. He made them repeat it three times (vs. 16, 21, 24), each time in stronger terms, and in clearer light. Nor was it in vain. It was no decision vanishing like "the morning cloud and early dew," but it lasted for a whole generation, as long as the people lived who made this choice (Josh. 24: 31; Judg. 2: 7).

17, 18. These verses express some of the reasons noted above for their choice. It is true that there came later reactions. Some one has said that "sudden resolutions, like the sudden rise of the mercury in the barometer, indicate nothing but the changeableness of the weather." Sometimes this is true, but a deliberate thoughtful resolution is a real elevation of the life. Battles may be lost in life's warfare, but there is a real gain if one continues to war against the evil within. Good resolutions pave not the pathway to hell, but the pathway to heaven. The only real failure is in not continuing to resolve till the end is gained. It took centuries for the Israelites to become wholly freed from idolatry, but the result came.

ILLUSTRATION. Carlyle, speaking of the Reformation, says: "Once risen into this divine white heat of temper, *were it only for a season and not again*, it is henceforth considerable through all its remaining history. Nations are benefited for ages by being thrown once into divine white heat in this manner. And no nation that has not had such divine paroxysms at any time is apt to come to much." So these wonderful experiences help us all the rest of our lives. Revival heights bless us evermore; and when they have passed away, and we have come again into our ordinary routine, a new light still shines on the daily life, the level is higher, the ideal is nobler.

FOURTH. THE RESOLUTION ENFORCED BY A SOLEMN APPEAL AND WARNING (vs. 19, 20). **19. Ye cannot serve the Lord,** etc., *i. e.*, "ye cannot in your own strength; it is more difficult than you imagine." — *J. F., and B.* "It cannot be supposed for a moment that Joshua intended to deter the people from the service of God by representing it as impracticable or dangerous. On the contrary, his design is to enlist them more sincerely and steadfastly in it." — *Bush.* It was a very serious and difficult thing to

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20. [1] If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, [2] then he will turn and do you hurt, evil, and consume you, after that he hath done you good.

21. And the people said unto Jŏsh'u-a, Nay; but we will serve the LORD.

22. And Jŏsh'u-a said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that [3] ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, We are, We are witnesses.

23. Now therefore [4] put away, *said he*, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD, the God of Is'ra-el.

[1] 1 Chron. 28: 9; Isa. 1: 28.
[2] Josh. 23: 15; Acts 7: 42.
[3] Psa. 119: 173.
[4] V. 14; Gen. 35: 2.

serve God, and unless they were true-hearted and sincere, they would not succeed. **For he is an holy God**, and therefore cannot endure anything impure or selfish or wicked in his children. **He is a jealous God**, unwilling to have a rival, as a true husband or wife is and ought to be unwilling to have a rival in the other's affections. Such a rival is intrinsically opposed to the very nature of the relation. **He will not forgive your transgressions.** "Rather, 'will not pass by,' as if taking no notice. Joshua is supposing their wilful rebellion and forsaking of God." — *Gray*. He will not tolerate your transgressions. He will punish them, and take every means to save you from them. It will not be possible, under God's rule, to prosper while continuing in sin, as was shown in the case of the fiery serpents and their complaints at Meribah, and the disaster at Ai. The appeal was made "in such terms as to challenge their manly resoluteness, and arouse their determination. As the quaint English commentator puts it, he 'drives the nail to the head.' He acts upon the maxim, 'Fast bind, fast find.' In his view, no hasty, superficial promising will do. So he sets the difficulties of the case before them, and then we have the colloquy in which they, in the face of the difficulties, reiterate their decision." — *Professor Beecher* in *S. S. Times*. They were to be like boats moving through the waves, not like corks, merely rising and falling with them.

FIFTH. THE PEOPLE REITERATE THEIR DECISION (v. 21). **21. And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but**, rather "for." All you say makes our resolution more firm. Nothing can move us from our decision. Or possibly the sense is, — **Nay**, these evils will not come upon us, for **we will serve the Lord**. The warnings had a good effect. Warnings are not meant to frighten men into religion and right doing, but to utilize their foresight and wisdom and prudence, and to keep them from going blindly and ignorantly to destruction. The falling barometer does not frighten the ship's captain, but informs him and urges him to preparation against the coming storm.

IV. **Three Witnesses to their Promise.** — Vs. 22–25. THE FIRST WITNESS, THEMSELVES. **22. Ye are witnesses against yourselves.** Your public promise to obey will be a witness that you know your duty and accepted the conditions of blessings for obedience and punishment for disobedience. This witness will warn you if you are tempted to go astray, and will justify God's dealings with you, if, forsaking God, you suffer the bitter punishment.

WITNESSING AGAINST OURSELVES. It is still true of men that they are witnesses against themselves as to their duty toward God now; and they will be all the witnesses needed in the day of judgment. (1) Every sinner's conscience is a witness against his course. (2) The principles on which business men must act as the condition of worldly success will witness against those who refuse to apply like principles to religion, — principles, which, if lived out, would lead them to be Christians. (3) The faultfindings of men against good people show that these faultfinders know what is right, and are to blame if they do not live up to it. (4) The principles on which good government in this world is based will justify God's moral dealings with men. (5) The obedience which parents require of their children, the gratitude acknowledged to be due for favors received, the honor demanded for those to whom honor belongs, will all witness to the justice of God's demand for our obedient and loving service. (6) Our professions of religion are an abiding witness against us, if we forsake God.

23. **Now therefore.** If you have spoken truly, show it by your actions, and **put away . . . the strange gods which are among you.** This shows that there was need of Joshua's warning. The disease was only beginning, but if let alone it would destroy the

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24. And the people said unto Jŏsh'u-a, The LORD our God will we serve, and unto his voice will we obey. hearken.

25. So Jŏsh'u-a [1] made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance [2] in Shē'chem.

[1] Ex. 15: 25. [2] V. 26.

whole body. **And incline your heart unto the Lord God,** for if they gave God their hearts, they would not worship idols; and all acts of worship, even to the Lord, were in vain, unless they proceeded from a heart of love. The supreme love of God was the fountain from which all morality and all their prosperity and success would flow. They only truly worship God, who worship in spirit and in truth.

24. Again, in still stronger words, they promise. **His voice will we obey.** Thus there has been a threefold promise on the part of the people to engrave it deep into their souls.

THE SECOND WITNESS WAS A PUBLIC PLEDGE AND COVENANT. 25. **So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day,** *i. e.*, "he solemnly ratified and renewed the covenant of Sinai (Ex. 19: 20), as Moses had done before him in the plains of Moab (Deut. 29: 1)." — *Cook.* **Set them a statute.** "Either he formed the whole into a statute and ordinance which was promulgated for all Israel to receive and obey, or it may mean that he declared or propounded to them, he set before them, the sum and substance of the Mosaic statutes, which their covenant obliged them to observe." — *Bush.* Joshua wrote all these words in the book of the law of the Lord (v. 26). This was on the same principle as the Lord's Supper and the church covenant and the temperance pledge. The words were for all time a witness for them if they did right, and a witness against them if they did wrong.

THE THIRD WITNESS was a great monumental stone set up "under an oak (or oak grove) that was by the sanctuary of the Lord" (v. 26) perhaps the ancient altar where Abraham and Jacob had worshiped centuries before.

ILLUSTRATION. Webster's words on Bunker Hill. "That motionless shaft will be the most powerful of speakers. Its speech will be of civil and religious liberty. It will speak of patriotism and courage. It will speak of the moral improvement and elevation of mankind. Decrepit age will lean against its base, and ingenuous youth gather around it, speak to each other of the glorious events with which it is connected, and exclaim, 'Thank God, I also am an American.'"

LESSON VII. — November 16.

THE TIME OF THE JUDGES. — Judges 2: 7–16.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *They cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses.* — PSA. 107: 19.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The remaining regular lessons are from a distinct period or epoch in the history of the Jewish nation.

It is well to notice first the development of the Israelites. In fact, we are studying the making of a nation.

Patriarchal Period.	The Discipline of Egypt.	The Wilderness Training.	The Conquest.	The Judges.	The Kings.

There are many difficult questions concerning this period and the recorded history, some of which we will touch upon at the

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 18, 19; Deut. 8: 2; Job 33: 29, 30; Rom. 12: 5, 6.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

The Polychrome Bible on Judges, by Prof. George F. Moore, D.D., with an original translation; *The International Critical Commentary* on Judges, by Prof. George F. Moore, D.D.; *The Lex Mosaica*, or, *the Law of Moses and the Higher Criticism*, the chapter on "The Period of the Judges," by Richard V. French, LL.D., F.S.A.; *The Bible as Literature*, "The Age of the

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beginning of the lesson. But these may be omitted in teaching the younger classes.

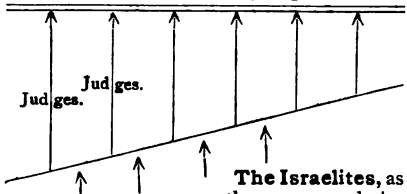
THE SECTION

is the general view given of the whole period (Judg. 2: 6–3: 6).

Book of Judges. See below.

Perhaps the following diagram will make more plain to our pupils the work of the judges in connection with the slow and variable progress of the nation in moral life.

The Ideal. — What they ought to be.



The Israelites, as they were, are designated by the lower line. The judges are represented by the arrows pointing upward to the ideal. The arrows below represent the influence of the oppressions and sufferings for their sins, urging them to be better. Altogether there is a gradual upward movement.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

Subjects to be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

The judges.
The Book of the Judges.
The condition of Israel at this time.
Why they fell into sin.
Punishment and its necessity.
Loving help as a motive.

Judges," by Professor Batten; *Introduction to Old Testament Literature*, by Professor Driver; *Outline Studies of the Books of the Old Testament*, by Professor Moorehead. There are some excellent remarks applicable to the study of the Judges in Professor Moulton's *Literary Study of the Bible*, on "The Higher Unity in Literature," pp. 92–96. Prof. Ira M. Price's *Syllabus of Old Testament History;* Geikie's *Hours with the Bible;* Stanley's *Jewish Church*, chaps. 13–19; Professor Edersheim's *Bible History;* Prof. Marcus Dod's *Israel's Iron Age; Pulpit Commentary; Bible Commentary; Expositor's Bible; Cambridge Bible; Commentaries* by Bush, Keil, Lange, Ellicott.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: How God helped the People to be Good.

I. THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

Judges. The period of the Judges in the history.
Construction of the book.

II. THE DEATH OF JOSHUA (vs. 6-9).

III. GENERAL CONDITIONS OF THE TIMES OF THE JUDGES (v. 10).

Government.
Religion and education.
Training of children.
Partly subdued.
Development.
General prosperity mingled with adversity.

IV. THE FALL INTO SIN (vs. 11–13).

V. WHAT GOD DID TO SAVE AND RESTORE (vs. 14–16).

Punishment.
Mercy and deliverance.

VI. PRACTICAL LESSONS.

I. **The Book of Judges.** — FIRST. THE NAME. This book is so named because it is the record of the exploits of some of the leaders, heroes, champions, and deliverers of Israel during one marked period of their history, extending from the Conquest of Palestine to the period of the kings.

SECOND. THE JUDGES. "The signification of the Hebrew word is much wider than that of the Greek κριτής, the Latin *judex*, or the English *judge*." The judge was not only the *vindicator*, the *punisher*, but also the *defender*, the *deliverer*. And "as the administration of justice was, in times of peace, the most important function of the chieftain or king, the noun is sometimes equivalent to *ruler*. . . . It is clear that the writer regarded these judges as a *succession of chiefs*, who arose in different parts of the land, *ruling with an authority* which was *personal and not hereditary*." — *Prof. Geo. F. Moore, D.D.*

"They were more like Peter the Hermit and Jeanne d'Arc than like Roman dictators." — *Seelye.* In most cases they gained their authority by their great personal qualities and executive powers, shown by their military success in delivering the people from the oppressors.

The nation had no fixed political capital, and the judge selected his own place of residence (Judg. 4: 5; 10: 1, 2). "He was surrounded by but little splendor, having no royal court, in the proper sense of the term." — *Johnson.* "They received no salary, imposed no tributes, made no laws, but merely exercised, for the deliverance of Israel, the

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6. And Now when [1] Jŏsh'u-a had let sent the people go away, the children of Is'ra-el went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land.

[1] Josh. 22: 6.

personal ascendency conferred upon them by 'the Spirit of God.'" — *Ellicott.* There were fifteen judges in all. Eight were military heroes, five seem to have led more peaceful lives; while Eli the high priest and Samuel the prophet stand apart with peculiar missions.

THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES. According to 1 Kings 6: 1, there were 480 years between the Exodus and the commencement of the Temple in the fourth year of Solomon's reign. Deducting from this the 40 years in the wilderness, 25 years of Joshua in Canaan, and 20 or 40 for Saul's reign, 40 for David's reign, and 3 years of Solomon's reign, the period of the judges would be 480 − 148 = 332 years (or 480 − 128 = 352 years), including the judgeships of Eli and Samuel up to the beginning of the reign of Saul. Of this about 280 years belong to the book of Judges. But if we add together the numbers given in Judges they amount to 410 years. For this and other reasons it is entirely probable that "the oppressions and deliverances were not successive, but, in part, synchronous. They were, in fact, without exception, local struggles; and it is not only conceivable, but highly probable, that while one part of the land was enjoying security under its judge, other tribes were groaning under the foreign yoke." — *Professor Moore.* While several of the events were thus occurring at the same time in different parts of the land, in other cases the judges ruled practically over the whole. "The judges formed temporary heads in particular centers, or over particular groups of tribes, — Barak, in the north of Israel, Gideon, in the center, Jephthah, on the east of Jordan, Samson, in the extreme southwest." — *Driver.*

DATES. For the order, dates, and durations of the rule of the various judges, see Old Testament Chronology, p. 6.

The period of 280 years extends, according to common chronology, from the death of Joshua, B. C. 1426, to the birth of Samuel, B. C. 1146.

FOURTH. THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BOOK OF JUDGES. The book of the Judges consists of three parts:—

1. Judg. 1–2: 5, giving a brief review of the wars immediately after the death of Joshua. Professors Driver, Moore, and others regard this period as a résumé of the conquest under Joshua, making the first statement, "After the death of Joshua it came to pass," to be a later addition, referring not to the immediately following events, but to the period of the judges as a whole. And they find many contradictions between the two accounts. But it seems more scientific to take the account as it stands, and use the facts as given to us, and then there is no contradiction, but merely the differences of fact in two different periods.

2. From Judg. 2: 6–16: 31 we have a history of successive oppressions and deliverances by judges, not probably all in chronological order, but selected from the history to teach great religious lessons for the good of the nations.

3. Judg. 17–21 are an appendix throwing light on the social and religious life of the times; to which should be added the book of Ruth, which sheds a more beautiful and pleasing light over all.

A distinction must be made between the date of the events, the date of the first records of these events, and the date when the books were put into their present shape. There are the same differences in modern history. English history has been written over many times, and the latest historians use their predecessor's work as well as the earliest contemporary documents, and the history is, doubtless, the more exactly true on that account, and are readable by us, while the earlier ones could not well be read on account of the changes in language.

TIME. It is uncertain at what date the book of Judges was completed in its present form. Professor Moore thinks it was not till after the exile. But there were certainly earlier records, and, doubtless, written histories of these events not far from the time of their occurrence.

II. **The Death of Joshua.** — Vs. 6–9. 6. **And when Joshua.** On the life and character of Joshua, see Lesson I. of this Quarter. **Let the people go,** as in Josh. 24: 28. It therefore probably refers to their departure from the great meeting in Shechem after his farewell address, and their solemn covenant.

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7. [1] And the people served the LORD all the days of Jŏsh'u-a, and all the days of the elders that [a] outlived Jŏsh'u-a, who had seen all the great works / work of the LORD, that he had / did wrought for Is'ra-el.

8. And [2] Jŏsh'u-a the son of Nŭn, the servant of the LORD, died, being / being an hundred and ten years old.

9. [3] And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in [4] Tĭm'nath-hē'rēs, in the mount / hill country of E'phrăĭm, on the north side of the hill / of the mountain of Gā'ăsh.

10. And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which [5] knew not the LORD, nor yet the works / work which he had done / wrought for Is'ra-el.

[1] Josh. 24: 31.
[2] Josh. 24: 29.
[3] Josh. 24: 30.
[4] Josh. 19: 50.
[5] Ex. 5: 2; 1 Sam. 2: 12; Jer. 9: 3.
a Hebrew, *prolonged days after Joshua.*

7. Served the Lord all the days of Joshua. So deep was the impress of this great and good man upon the nation. **All the days of the elders.** Those who were leaders by reason of age and ability. This implies some kind of at least local political organization. "These *elders* would be old enough to take part in the war of Canaan twenty-five years before, according to Judg. 3: 1, 2; and therefore reckoning from the age of twenty to seventy, we cannot be far wrong in assigning a period of about fifty years from the entrance into Canaan to the death of the elders, or twenty or twenty-five years after the death of Joshua." — *Cook.* **Seen all the great works of the Lord.** This reveals another powerful source of impression upon the character of men, — the experience of God's wonderful works for the good of men. These two are among the mightiest moral forces for the progress of man.

8. And Joshua . . . died. Vs. 6–9 are a repetition of Josh. 24: 28–31, with slight variations.

9. Buried him . . . in Timnath-heres (or *Serah* in Joshua), **in the mount** (hill country) **of Ephraim,** "about nine miles south of Shechem." — *Geo. Adam Smith.*

III. **The General Conditions of the Times of the Judges.** — V. 10. **All that generation** (see on v. 7). **Anothef generation . . . which knew not the Lord.** "Had no practical or experimental knowledge of him; no deep or lively impression of his goodness; no affectionate, grateful, or devout sense of the wondrous manifestations of his power in their behalf (see on Ex. 1: 8)." — *Bush.*

1. GOVERNMENT. The government was a theocracy; *i. e.*, God himself was the chief ruler, and there was no visible central supreme power, either in king, president, or congress; a most excellent plan if the people all remained good. Each tribe was independent. The people were divided into hereditary clans, something like the clans of the Scotch Highlanders. Each village was complete and independent. The laws were the laws given them through Moses, and no new ones were made. The priests were the ultimate appeal in cases of dispute. The high priest was a kind of prime minister of God. There was no standing army, and no provision was made for war. Professional soldiers did not exist.

2. RELIGION AND EDUCATION. There was a central place of religious worship at Shiloh, for the whole nation. Here were the tabernacle, the ark, the altar for daily sacrifices; and hence at this place the tribes were to assemble three times a year for the great feasts. The Levites were intended to be scattered through the nation, as its religious teachers. We know that in Samuel's times there were schools of the prophets in various places. The religious institutions bound the people together into one nation; and the Mosaic laws separated them from all other nations, thus intensifying the national idea.

3. TRAINING OF CHILDREN. There seems to have been a great neglect of family training and family religion after the death of Joshua. If the former generation had obeyed God's command to teach their children what God had done for them and said to them, no such state of things could have arisen as is described in the book of Judges.

4. THE OLD NATIONS LEFT. The Canaanites, though conquered, were only partially subdued. Their armies had been defeated in battle, pursued, scattered, broken, and most of their strong cities captured, and more or less thoroughly destroyed; yet still they remained in very considerable force in the country, holding some of their strong points in defense. The duty of the Israelites was to drive the Canaanites wholly out of the land and to take full possession at the beginning. It was best that they should not be anni-

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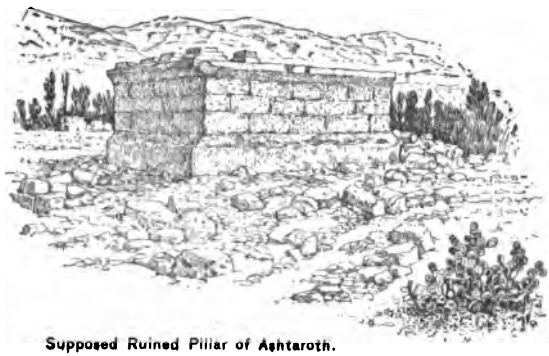


Goddess Ashtaroth.
RAWLINSON.

hilated at once before they could take possession (Deut. 7: 22), lest the wild beasts increase too fast in the wild lands; but the Israelites should have taken possession as soon as they could. Since they had not done this, the next best thing for them was a course of discipline by means of their sins. When they refused the divine teacher and his lessons of victory, courage, heroism, and fidelity, then they must go to school to a different and severer teacher, and from annoyances, temptations, dangers, and evil men gain discipline and learn the lessons of obedience and righteousness. On account of their neglect, they were led into idolatry and other sins, and were troubled for a thousand years. A thorough conquest at first would have saved them ages of suffering and sinning.

5. DEVELOPMENT. Punishment for their sins was both the natural outgrowth of their actions, and the necessary means of saving them from sin and destruction. It was like the driving of Adam and Eve out of paradise. It was a punishment, but a redemptive punishment. After they had sinned Eden was the worst place in the world for them; but outside, by thorns and sorrows, they were disciplined so that they might reach the paradise above. So, since the Israelites had disobeyed and left many of the heathen nations in the land, it was necessary that these should be made the instruments of punishment to the Israelites to save them from destruction. Thus a real growth was going on during these periods of suffering and anarchy, and of deliverance and peace. "They learned by perpetual struggle to defend their new home, and the free exercise of their religion, and so they prepared for coming generations a sacred place where that religion and national culture might develop. During the long pause of apparent inaction, a hidden movement was going on, and the principles and truths so marvelously brought to light were taking firm root." — *Ewald*. The progress was like the winding road up a mountain, often seeming to reverse the former direction, yet with always an upward trend. It was like the coming in of the tides, by waves, with constant reactions; while on the whole the tide was gaining.

6. GENERAL PROSPERITY MINGLED WITH ADVERSITY. "It would be a mistake to suppose that there was nothing, during all the centuries covered by this book, but an unbroken series of apostasies and judgments. It would be as correct to infer from a modern criminal calendar that there were none but law-breakers in the country." — *Professor Green*. From a hasty glance at the records we get an impression, as we used to do from the histories of a generation ago, that most of the years were filled with wars and oppressions. But a careful study and a glance at the chronological chart, p. 6, shows that the times of peace and prosperity were much longer than the times of war and oppression. The black lines denote wars, the white spaces denote peace, those shaded denote oppressions. The intervals of peace naturally take up less space in the history than do the severer epochs of war and oppression, which mark sudden steps in the discipline of the people.



Supposed Ruined Pillar of Ashtaroth.

"The times of quiet and unbroken peace,
Though for a nation times of blessedness,
Give back faint echoes from the historian's page."

A simple crime or accident will occupy more space in the newspapers than a whole lifetime of holy and peaceful living. So in the ordinary histories of the Wars of the Roses in England one would scarcely gain a hint of the progress and development of the people, while the leaders were busy with fighting.

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11. And the children of Is'ra-el did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Bā'al-ĭm:

12. And and they [1] forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of E'gypt, and followed [2] other gods, of the gods of the people peoples that were were round about them, and [3] bowed themselves down unto them; and they provoked the LORD to anger.

[1] Deut. 31: 16. [2] Deut. 6: 14. [3] Ex. 20: 5.

Whate'er of folly, shame, or crime
Within thy mighty bounds transpires,
With speed defying space and time
Comes to us on the accusing wires;

While all thy wealth of noble deeds,
Thy homes of peace, thy votes unsold,
Thy love that pleads for human needs,
The wrongs redressed, but half is told!

Each poor wretch, in his prison cell
Or gallows-noose, is interviewed;
We know the single sinner well,
And not the nine and ninety good.

Yet, if on daily scandals fed,
We seem at times to doubt thy worth,
We know thee still, when all is said,
The best, the dearest spot on earth.
— *Whittier.*

Taking Ruth, and the story of Elkanah, Hannah, and Samuel into the account, we gain a more correct and hopeful view of the times. Where will you find more charming pictures of peaceful rural life?

IV. **The Fall into Sin.** — Vs. 11–13. **11. And the children of Israel did evil.** They first forgot God (v. 10). Their faith lost its reality and power. The decay of faith is the prelude to the decay of morals. **In the sight of the Lord,** in the presence of his commandments, and in view of his works of goodness, and his past punishments of sin. The sin was treason towards their God. It was rebellion to his face. **And served.** "The true religion is a service of love and reverence; but all false religion is a service of superstition and terror. The impenitent often think that by refraining from being Christians they escape service; while, on the contrary, they serve Satan, who is a cruel master and whose wages are death." — *Johnson.* **Baalim,** the plural of *Baal,* "an intensive plural, great lord, or supreme lord, like *Elohim,* the Hebrew word for God, which is in the plural." — *Prof. C. A. Briggs.* Or it represents the variety of offices and attributes of the god; or it represents the multitude of local deities. There was no one god named Baal, but there were innumerable Baals, each with a proper name of its own. So *Professor Moore.* Baal was worshiped in the use of images of wood, stone, bronze, silver, and gold, and pillars of stone. These images and pillars were set up by the side of altars as places of sacrifice, upon high places, either on hills or artificial mounds, towers or roofs of palaces, and sometimes in temples. Baal was worshiped by kissing his images (1 Kings 19: 18), enthusiastic dances, cutting of the person, and other ecstatic rites (1 Kings 18: 26–28), by incense and sacrifices, but the choicest sacrifice was an only son. The favorite form of sacrifice to his consort Ashtaroth was prostitution. Jehovah was worshiped without images, an unseen but infinite eternal God. He was worshiped by sacrifices, every part of which was full of spiritual meaning, showing the people the awful evil of sin, teaching holiness, purity, consecration, communion with God, brotherly love. — *Condensed from Prof. C. A. Briggs* in *S. S. Times.*



Baal-Hammon.
PERROT AND CHIPIEZ.

12. And they forsook the Lord. Probably not all, but enough to represent the nation. "The grand success of the reformation achieved by Samuel, and such glimpses of Hebrew life as are given in the book of Ruth, seem to imply that, as a whole, there was always a latent religious life in the mass of the people, needing only to be roused and purified." — *Geikie.* **Which brought them out of the land of Egypt.** Who had done such wonders for them; to whom they owed their very existence as a nation. This is stated to show the ingratitude, the folly, and the treason the Israelites committed in forsaking God. **And provoked the Lord to anger.** "They exasperated Jehovah." There was no passion, no vindictiveness, but grief and indignation, an intense feeling against sin. The people he wished to save refused to be saved. The people for whom he was doing great

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13. And they forsook the LORD, [1] and served Bā'al and (the) Ash'ta-rŏth.
14. [2] And the anger of the LORD was (hot kindled) against Is'ra-el, and he [3] delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and [4] he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they [5] could not any longer stand before their enemies.
15. Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had (said, spoken,) and [6] as the LORD had sworn unto them: and they were (greatly sore) distressed.

[1] Judg. 3: 7; Psa. 106: 36.
[2] Judg. 3: 8; Psa. 106: 40.
[3] 2 Kings 17: 20.
[4] Judg. 3: 8; 4: 2; Psa. 44: 12.
[5] Lev. 26: 37; Josh. 7: 12.
[6] Lev. 26; Deut. 28.

things, for whom he was seeking a glorious and blessed career, through whom he would save and uplift the world, were basely casting these pearls away, and like swine trampling them under their feet. No good person could help being indignant. Love itself must flame and burn like a volcano.

13. **Ashtaroth**, the plural of Ashtoreth, as Baalim of Baal, and probably for the same reasons. Ashtaroth, "most happy, or fortunate, the supreme source of happiness," was the female deity corresponding to Baal, the moon or the planet Venus, as Baal was the sun. "This female deity combines the attributes of the classic Juno, Venus, and Minerva." — *Briggs*. She was the goddess of the sexual passions, and was worshiped with licentious rites. The Roman Venus was allied to this goddess, the goddess of springtime, of gardens, of blossoming vegetation. See Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*.

V. **What God did to save and Restore.** — Vs. 14–16. FIRST. HE MADE THEM SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES OF THEIR SINS. 14. **The anger** (indignation) **of the Lord was hot.** What had seemed dull and tame to them blazed up in a fiery flame. The more intense the love, the more intense also the indignation. If the feelings against sin do not flame and burn, then the love also is a feeble thing.

SECOND. **He delivered them,** for punishment. Their enemies were only the instruments in the hands of God. From whatever source the punishment of sin comes, it is from God. **Into the hands of spoilers.** Those who took the spoils of war; also robbers, plundering bands. "Ancient warfare was always attended by the greatest cruelties; it was always predatory; the property of the people was taken away, and the people themselves carried in bonds as slaves. Modern warfare is sufficiently horrible; but the ancient was tenfold more horrible." — *Johnson*. **He sold them.** For the sake of the spoils which attracted them, the fruits of Israel's prosperity, the nations were allowed to gain victories over them, **so that they** (the Israelites) **could not any longer stand before their enemies.** Luxury and vice weakened them, disobedience lessened their patriotism, consciousness of wrong took away their courage and manliness, their turning from God aroused jealousies and caused divisions. They ate of the fruit of their own doings and were filled with their own devices. Compare Prov. 1: 24–32.

> "The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
> Make instruments to plague us."
>
> — *Shakespeare*.

> "With repentance, his only companion, he lay,
> And a dismal companion was he."

15. **The hand of the Lord was against them.** His power and influence. The Almighty God was against them. Their only Hope was changed into an enemy. God could not bless a disobedient people, for that would be to encourage disobedience. **As the Lord had said.** The Lord keeps his threatenings as well as his promises.

ILLUSTRATION. It is stated that two Jewish rabbis were crossing Zion Hill in Jerusalem and saw a fox run by. One wept at the sight, while the other cheerfully smiled. He who had laughed inquired the cause of the other's tears. "How can I help weeping," he replied, "when I see the threatenings against our holy city so exactly fulfilled?" "And for that reason I rejoice," said the other, "for the prophecies of its glorious restoration are equally plain and numerous; and as the punishment has been literally executed, we may the more certainly expect the accomplishment of the promises." All this evil was like the "woe unto you" of Jesus, for the purpose of urging the people to forsake their sins and return to God.

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16. Nevertheless [1] Aud the LORD raised up judges, which delivered saved them out of the hand of those that spoiled them.

[1] Judg. 3: 9, 10; Acts 13: 20.

SECOND. HE GAVE THEM DELIVERANCE. **16. Nevertheless.** God punishes his people, but he does not destroy them. As soon as his discipline has led them to repentance and to a better life, he delivers them from the evils their sins had brought upon them. **The Lord raised up,** in various ways, by various means; sometimes by a direct call, sometimes by natural methods of his providence. But in all cases it was the Lord who did it. **Judges,** deliverers. See above. God by his goodness would lead them to repentance. This is the motive God loves to apply to men so long and so far as possible.

VI. **Some Practical Lessons.** — 1. In the book of the Judges we are studying not a continuous history, but lessons from life, than which nothing is deeper, more interesting, and more instructive.

2. The book of Judges impresses upon its readers two great lessons: (1) That unfaithfulness to Jehovah is always punished; "that whenever Israel falls away from him, he withdraws his protection and leaves it defenseless before its foes." — *Int. Crit. Com.* (2) With this is also taught "the lesson of Jehovah's unfailing readiness to come to the help of his people when in their deep distress they turn to him." — *Polychrome Bible.*

3. "Goodness or love relatively to persistent sin is righteous punishment; relatively to penitent sorrow it is mercy and forgiveness." — *Bishop Hervey.*

ILLUSTRATION. "If the reply comes that there is no use in trying to frighten men into doing right, all I can say is that we are not trying to frighten men into doing right. I think we should all agree that there is very little virtue, and certainly no beauty, in rectitude that is compulsory. But if I were sick and you were to come to me and tell me that I was in a bad way, and try to alarm me into consulting a physician, you would think it a very inapposite reply for me to make to say that for you to alarm me about my health showed in you an exceedingly narrow and inconsiderate and antiquated temper, and that no man ever yet secured his health by attempts made to frighten him into recovery. You would answer, and very reasonably, that you had no expectation that frightening me would make me well, but that you thought that by appealing to the spot where I kept my anxieties, I might be induced to put myself under the care of a physician, who would make me well." — *C. H. Parkhurst, D.D.*

4. There is great danger in making intimate friendships with the world, its sinful ways of business, its haunts of vice, its debasing literature, its selfish pleasures, its worldly fashions.

5. The surrounding nations were allowed to be the instrument for their punishment. This was wise, for it tended to make the people averse to the things which tempted them, as mothers often put something bitter upon the food they do not wish their children to eat. So it often is with the worldly vices, and our companions in them, which become a warning and instrument of punishment.

"One cannot touch the pitch of idolatry without being defiled. One cannot stray into the pleasure palaces of sensual delights without peril. There is too much in man that answers to their allurements." — *Bishop Warren.*

ILLUSTRATION. 6. Like the forsaking of God by these Israelites, our departures from God show *ingratitude* for his mercies as innumerable and as bright as the stars; *foolishness,* to make an enemy of the greatest Being in the universe, who holds all forces under his control; *treason,* to rebel against our true king. The Israelites fell before the difficulties and temptations, by the overcoming of which they might have walked as kings and princes, the leading nation of the earth. So the very difficulties which God puts in our way to develop our character, to stimulate our courage, to enlarge our being, — which mean higher thrones, brighter crowns, sweeter harps, — are transformed by us into excuses for sin. We stumble over the very steps God has given us by which to climb to glory.

7. As in the case of the Canaanites left in the Promised Land, so it is with the Canaanites in our own hearts. The victory over sin cannot be gained in a day, by one great battle. It is a war, not a battle. But God's people should make a constant warfare, and be constant victors. Every sin left in the heart, every faculty or power not wholly consecrated to Christ, every lust unsubdued, will be a trouble and a sorrow all our days. The only true way, the only easy way to live a Christian life is to drive out every sin from the soul, and let only the holy and heavenly remain. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things."

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LESSON VIII. — November 23.

WORLD'S TEMPERANCE LESSON. — Isaiah 28 : 1–7.

Study Isa. 28 : 1–13. Read Isa. 28.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***They also have erred through wine.*** — ISA. 28: 7.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The fourth Sunday in November has been set apart by the English Sunday-school leaders as a world's temperance Sunday, preferring this to a lesson every quarter. We all join together, over the whole world, in studying this lesson.

Note the peculiarity of this warning. The inhabitants of Judea, the southern kingdom, are warned against disobedience, irreligion, and immorality, by what they can see taking place beyond their borders in the northern kingdom, where the overwhelming scourge of the Assyrian army is devastating the land for the very sins against which the prophet warns his own countrymen of Judea. It is like one pointing a young man, tempted by strong drink, to a drunkard and the evils that are overwhelming him.

Learn something about Isaiah and his prophecies.

Study the situation in both kingdoms.

LESSON OUTLINE.

I. THE HISTORICAL SITUATION.
- The book of Isaiah.
- The scene.
- The situation.

II. THE MORAL CONDITION THAT WAS RUINING THE NATION (vs. 1, 7).
- Their opportunity.
- Their sin.
- Application to temperance.

III. THE OVERWHELMING SCOURGE (vs. 2–4).
- The Assyrian scourge.
- The temperance application.

IV. GOD'S PROMISES OF HELP (vs. 5, 6).
- Temperance application.

LEARN BY HEART.

V. 7; 1 Cor. 9: 25, 27; 1 Pet. 5: 8.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

Subjects to be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

The historical situation.
Isaiah's method of argument.
The overwhelming scourge.
Intemperance as a scourge.
Why God allows such evils to follow intemperance.
God's help to escape.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

Expositor's Bible on Isaiah, by Prof. Geo. Adam Smith; Delitzsch's *Commentary* on Isaiah, 2 vols., new edition; *Pulpit Commentary;* Cheyne on Isaiah; Kitto's *Daily Bible Illustrations*, for accounts of the siege and captivity. Josephus, and Charlotte Elizabeth in *Judea Capta* give an account of a similar siege by the Roman Emperor Titus. Rawlinson's *Historical Illustrations* and Professor Sayce's *Fresh Light from the Monuments* throw light from secular sources on this period.

Professor Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, "Degeneration"; Bushnell's *Sermons*, "The Capacity of Religion extirpated by Disuse"; *Weapons for Temperance Warfare*, by Belle M. Brain (35 cts., Christian Endeavor Soc., Boston); *The Effective Temperance Committee*, by Amos R. Wells (5 cts., Christian Endeavor Soc.); and the *Economic Aspects of the Liquor Problem*, by John Koven, an investigation made for the Committee of Fifty ($1.50, Houghton, Mifflin & Co.). *The Crystal River turned on the Black Valley Railroad and the Black Valley Country* ($1.00, Lothrop).

I. **The Historical Situation.** — ISAIAH prophesied about sixty years, from B. C. 759–698, from the last years of Uzziah till toward the close of Hezekiah's reign.

TIME. This prophecy was spoken about B. C. 725, three years before the fall of Samaria.

TO WHOM. It was spoken to the people of Judah and Jerusalem in view of the character of the neighboring kingdom of Israel and the punishment for their sins that was rapidly approaching.

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1. Woe to [1] the crown of pride, to the drunkards of E'phrăim, whose and
2 glorious beauty is a fading flower, to the fading flower of his glorious beauty, which are is on the head of the fat valleys valley of them
that are [a] overcome with wine!

[1] V. 3. [2] V. 4. *a* Hebrew, *smitten down*.

PLACE IN BIBLE HISTORY. 2 Kings 17: 1–23; 18: 1–10; 2 Chron. 29, 30.

KINGS. Hezekiah, king of Judah; Hoshea, king of Israel.

THE TWENTY-EIGHTH CHAPTER of the book of Isaiah "is one of the greatest of his prophecies. It is distinguished by that regal versatility of style, which places its author at the head of Hebrew writers. Keen analyses of character, realistic contrasts between sin and judgment, clever retorts and epigrams, rapids of scorn, and 'a spate' of judgment, but for final issue a placid stream of argument banked by sweet parable, — such are the literary charms of the chapter, which derives its moral grandeur from the force with which its currents set towards faith and reason, as together the salvation of states, politicians, and private men. The style mirrors life about ourselves, and still tastes fresh to thirsty men. The truths are relevant to every day in which luxury and intemperance abound, in which there are eyes too fevered by sin to see beauty in simple purity, and minds so surfeited with knowledge or intoxicated with their own cleverness, that they call the maxims of moral reason commonplace and scorn religious instruction as food for babes." — *Geo. Adam Smith*.

THE SCENE. Isaiah is speaking to the rulers and magnates at Jerusalem (v. 14) and warning them of their sin and danger.

He shows them their own condition by pointing them to the sin and ruin which are destroying the northern kingdom (v. 1). This is a mirror in which they can see themselves.

Then he shows them that this is their own condition (v. 7). Like the prophet Nathan to David, he says, Thou art the man. This is the portrait of yourselves.

He points out the overwhelming scourge which is devastating the glory of Ephraim, and declares that if the Judeans continue in the same sins, nothing can prevent them from being overwhelmed with the same ruin.

THE SITUATION. Palestine lay between the two great nations of the then known world, Assyria on the northeast, and Egypt on the southwest. Neither could reach the other without going through Palestine. Each wanted this narrow intermediate country, both as a defense against the other, and as a safe place where they could gather their forces for attack. The Assyrians from the north were at this time in northern Israel trying to capture Samaria, and devastating the country. Jerusalem, a strong fortress, a very Gibraltar, rarely captured, and outside of the great highways between the two great nations, felt safe. Egypt was making overtures to Judea, and the latter had made an agreement with them, which the prophet calls a "covenant with death" and an "agreement with hell." But Egypt made many promises, but never a fulfilment, and could not help Judea against the Assyrians. There was only one safety, and that was in obedience to the Lord God Almighty.

Within three or four years Samaria, the capital, was captured, and the northern kingdom swept out of existence by the Assyrians.

II. **The Moral Condition that was ruining the Nation.** — Vs. 1, 7. THEIR OPPORTUNITY. 1. God had set them apart for his service, to be trained for his kingdom, to be a righteous and glorious nation whose God is the Lord, and to be the means of leading all nations into the light and blessing of true religion and heavenly morality. No nobler and more glorious mission was ever given to any nation.

2. Corresponding to this object was an outward condition of great possibilities, a magnificent situation. "Samaria lay on a beautiful circular hill which commanded the country about in a regal way, and swelled up from a deep broad basin of about two stadia (furlongs) in diameter, encircled by a garland of still higher mountains. The situation was commanding, the hill cultivated up to the top in terraces, the neighborhood splendid and fertile." — *Delitzsch*. Jerusalem, too, was exceedingly beautiful for situation, "the joy of the whole earth."

THEIR SIN. 1. **Woe.** Not a wish or a prayer for woe, but a warning that woe was coming. **To the crown of pride.** The capital, so called because it crowned the hill, or because its battlemented walls resembled a crown. **To** (better, "of") **the drunkards of Ephraim,** put for the whole kingdom, because Ephraim was the leading tribe. **Whose**

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2. Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one; [1 which] as a tempest of hail, [and] a destroying storm, as a [flood tempest] of mighty waters overflowing, shall [he] cast down to the earth [a] with the hand.

3. [2] The crown of pride, [of] the drunkards of E'phrăi-ĭm, shall be trodden [b] under [feet: foot:]

4. [And and] [3] the [fading flower of his] glorious beauty, which [is] on the head of the fat valley, shall be [a fading flower, and] as the [hasty fruit firstripe fig] before the summer; which [when when] he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he [c] eateth it up.

5. In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people;

6. [And and] for a spirit of [judgment judgement] to him that sitteth in [judgment, judgement,] and for strength to them that turn [back] the battle [to at] the gate.

7. But [they these] also [4] have erred through wine, and through strong drink are [out of the way: gone astray;] [5] the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are [out of the way gone astray] through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble [in judgment. in judgement.]

[1] Isa. 30: 30; Ezek. 13: 11.
[2] V. 1.
[3] V. 1.
[4] Prov. 20: 1.
[5] Isa. 56: 10, 12.

a Or, *with violence.*
b Hebrew, *with feet.*
c Hebrew, *swalloweth.*

glorious beauty. The "glorious beauty" of Samaria was a beauty of magnificent luxury. "Summer" and "winter houses," distinct each from the other (Amos 3: 15); "ivory palaces" (1 Kings 22: 39; Amos 3: 15); a wealth of "gardens, vineyards, fig-orchards, and oliveyards" (Amos 4: 9); residences of "hewn stone" (Amos 5: 11); feasts enlivened with "the melody of viols" (Amos 5: 23); "beds of ivory" (Amos 6: 4); "wine in bowls" (Amos 6: 6); "chief ointments" (Amos 6: 6) constituted a total of luxurious refinement beyond which few nations had proceeded at the time. — *Rawlinson.* **Is a fading flower.** It was a kind of beauty that was liable to fade. It had nothing of the riches that endure, and which no power of man can take away. It was soon to wither before the "Sirocco of Assyrian invasion." **Which are** (rather, "is") **on the head** (or decks the head) **of the fat valleys.** "Samaria was built on a hill of an oval form, which rose up in the midst of a fertile valley shut in by mountains." — *Rawlinson.* **Of them,** etc. The possessors of this crown of pride and these rich valleys were overcome with wine. None but intoxicated people could be so blind as not to see their danger. **Overcome with wine,** *i. e.*, wine-smitten or wine-stricken. A strong description of the intellectual and moral effects of drunkenness. Gill's lively paraphrase is "smitten, beaten, knocked down with it as with a hammer, and laid prostrate on the ground, where they lie fixed to it, not able to get up." — *Alexander.*

7. **But they also,** even those in Judah, who saw the destruction of the neighboring kingdom. So even those in temperance families and communities are sometimes led astray.

FIRST. They **have erred through wine.** Like a drunkard, their steps were unsteady, they reeled from side to side, they could not walk in a straight line of duty, but erred from God's commandments. They have gone to forbidden places, they have wandered into sins of all kinds, through the influence of intoxicating liquors. Men will do things under their influence that they would never dream of doing when they are themselves.

SECOND. **The priest and the prophet have erred.** Strong drink biases and leads astray even the religious teachers of the land. The highest, the best, are not safe when they use intoxicating liquors. Many have fallen in this way.

THIRD. **They are swallowed up of wine.** "Men sometimes say that they swallow their wine; it were truer to say their wine swallows them." "It eats up their substance, it devours their health, it gnaws off the fine edges of their sense of honor; in fine, if it have its way, it will ultimately swallow them down, body and soul." — *Dr. Burrell.* They become wholly absorbed in their appetite. Men throw away all they have, and all they hope for, in this world and in the next, — family, fortune, happiness, life, heaven, everything, — to gratify their appetite for strong drink.

FOURTH. **They err in vision.** They cannot see things as they are.

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FIFTH. **They stumble in judgment.** They cannot judge anything correctly. Intoxicating liquors destroy the business judgment, and the clear decisions of conscience.

APPLICATION TO TEMPERANCE. 1. Every one who has become a drunkard was once an innocent child. God created him for great things, for an immortal destiny, for great usefulness, for a part in bringing in the millennial days, and transforming the world into the kingdom of heaven.

2. For this he gave him great advantages, — a beautiful world to live in, education, talents, religion, home, friends, health, opportunities.

3. But strong drink ruins all this. It destroys the power of usefulness. It weakens the intellect. It dulls the conscience. It perverts the judgment. A drinking captain cannot steer well. A drinking business man is liable to make bad bargains.

ILLUSTRATION. OPISTHOPHORIA. "Dr. Mazzotti tells of a man who had a scorbutic affection, which he set about to cure with whiskey. He got well of this trouble, but became a hard drinker, and soon found himself the victim of a rare disease called *opisthophoria*. This curious affection consists in inability to walk forward. When the patient was told to advance, he used every effort to do so, but could only succeed in going backward, and he continued to do so until he died."

It is very sad, but the habit of drinking is sure to breed this disease, and the victim is never able to go ahead in anything. His movement is all backward. He sees his shopmates and old acquaintances getting on comfortably, feeding and clothing and educating their children well, laying up some of their earnings against a rainy day, and gaining the respect and esteem of their neighbors and townsmen; but the poor fellow who is taken with the *opisthophoria* can never keep up with them. He is ever going the other way, is walking backward all the while, running in debt, starving his children, ruining his health, blasting his character, and finally stumbling into perdition.

"If you do not wish to get the *opisthophoria*, quit your beer." — *Condensed from Cyril*, in *The Congregationalist*.

ILLUSTRATION. "A schoolboy in Australia recently put the matter tersely, thus: 'I abstain from liquor because, if I wish to excel as a cricketer, Grace says, "Abstain"; as a walker, Weston says, "Abstain"; as an oarsman, Hanlon says, "Abstain"; as a swimmer, Webb says, "Abstain"; as a missionary, Livingstone says, "Abstain"; as a doctor, Clark says, "Abstain"; as a preacher, Farrar says, "Abstain."'" — *Youth's Companion*.

III. **The Overwhelming Scourge.** — Vs. 2–4. 2. **Behold the Lord hath.** He used the Assyrians as a rod wherewith to punish these wicked people. Had they been good, he could have saved them, for the Lord wielded the rod. **A strong one**, the Assyrian power. **A tempest of hail . . . a destroying storm . . . a flood of mighty waters**, describe in vivid speech the irresistible violence, the devastating force with which the Assyrians were about to overwhelm them. It is almost impossible for us to realize the devastating power of such half-savage hordes who lived upon the country, who ravaged villages, who murdered women and children, who had an unrestrained power. They were worse than the plagues of Egypt.

3. **The crown of pride** (of) **the drunkards.** Their capital, their riches, all they most rejoiced in would be **trodden under feet.** Samaria became a heap of ruins.

4. **As the hasty fruit.** R. V., "the firstripe fig before the summer," before the usual season for figs. Delitzsch translates thus: "And the fading flower of its sparkling ornament, which is on the head of the luxuriant valley, fares as an early fig before harvest, which he that sees gazes at, and it is scarcely in his hand when he swallows it." Such a delicacy so swiftly devoured



From a Photograph by Wilson.
The Old Colonnade, Samaria.

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was Samaria to the Assyrians. But Isaiah saw the gathering storm in the northeast. The Assyrian empire was still "maintained by a standing army of veteran soldiers, commanded by able generals" (*Sayce*), and soon their legions would sweep like a hurricane over Israel, beat upon Samaria, and Judah could not wholly escape its fury. Isaiah therefore "raised his voice to the magnates of Jerusalem: 'Lift your heads from your wine-bowls; look north. The sunshine is still on Samaria, and your fellow-drinkers there are reveling in security. But the storm creeps up behind. They shall certainly perish soon; even you cannot help seeing that. Let it scare you, for their sin is yours, and that storm will not exhaust itself on Samaria. Scorners of religion and righteousness, except ye cease being sceptical and drunken, and come back from your diplomacy to faith and reason, ye shall not be saved!'" — *George Adam Smith.*

THE TEMPERANCE APPLICATION of this historical fact and prophetic vision is plain. The overflowing scourge, the tempest of hail, the destroying storm, are but faint symbols of this curse. The Assyrian hordes, with all their fierceness and fury, did not do so much evil to Israel as Intemperance has done, and is now doing, to men. Their great army that poured over the land like a deluge was but a guerilla band compared with the army of Intemperance. It sweeps away from its victims, property, home, comfort, prosperity, usefulness, riches, life, all blessings, including heaven itself.

THE OLD DECANTER.

There was an old decanter,
and its mouth was gaping
wide; the rosy wine had
ebbed away and left its
crystal side; and the
wind went humming,
humming, up and
down the sides it
flew, and through
its reed-like, hollow
neck, the wildest notes
it blew. I placed it in
the window, where the
blast was blowing free, and
fancied that its pale mouth
sang the queerest strains to me.
"They tell me — puny conquerors!
the Plague has slain his ten, and
War his hundred thousand of the very
best of men; but I," — 'twas thus the bottle
spake — "but I have conquered more than all
your famous conquerors so feared and famed of
yore. Then come, ye youths and maidens all, come
drink from out my cup, the beverage that dulls the
brains and burns the spirits up; that puts to shame
your conquerors that slay their scores below, for
this has deluged millions with the lava tide of
woe. Though in the path of battle dark-
est waves of blood may roll; yet while
I killed the body, I have damned
the very soul. The cholera,
the plagues, the sword, such
ruin never wrought as I, in mirth or
malice, on the innocent have brought.
And still I breathe upon them, and they
shrink before my breath; and year by year my
thousands tread the dismal road of DEATH."

And yet moderate drinkers sip their wine, look complaisantly upon their crown of pride, and the glorious beauty of their surroundings, as if they were safe from this devastating power, which is far nearer them than they imagine. But they will not listen to the temperance prophets, nor hear the approaching tread of the destroying army. "At the

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first it is the wine of pleasant fellowship; at the last it is the 'wine of the wrath of Almighty God, poured out without mixture.' At the first it is the agreeable excitement of an evening; at the last it is the long-drawn agony of an endless perdition. At the first it is the grateful stimulus of an hour; at the last it is 'the worm that never dies, and the fire that never shall be quenched.'" — *Trask.*

IV. **God's Promises of Help.**—Vs. 5, 6. "To show the slaves of Circe the physical disaster impending — which you must begin by doing, if you are to impress their brutalized minds — is not enough. The lesson of Tennyson's *Vision of Sin* and of Arnold's *New Sirens* is not enough. . . . When you have made the sensual shiver before the disease that inevitably awaits them, you must go on to show that there are men who have the secret of surviving the most terrible judgments of God, and lift their figures calm and victorious against the storm-washed sky. . . . It is Isaiah's health as a moralist that he combines the two. No prophet ever threatened judgment more inexorable and complete than he. Yet he never failed to tell the sinner how possible it was for him to be different." — *Rev. George Adam Smith.*

5. **In that day.** The day when the drunkards of Ephraim perished because they would not take warning and repent. **Shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory.** He will sustain, defend, and bless, beyond the power of the heart to conceive, those who obey him. He will be a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty, both spiritually and outwardly. "And clearly the closing of the clouds around Samaria was coincident with the dawn of a brighter day in Judah. Hezekiah came to the throne only three years before the fatal siege of Samaria began. His accession must have been nearly contemporaneous with that expedition of Shalmaneser against Hoshea, when he 'shut him up, and bound him in prison' (2 Kings 17: 4). Yet he was not daunted by his neighbor's peril. He began his reign with a political revolution and a religious reformation. He threw off the yoke of Assyria, to which his father had submitted (2 Kings 18: 7), and he cleared the land of idols and idol-worship. It was the dawn of a day of promise, such as the prophet seems to point to in these two verses." — *Rawlinson.* **Unto the residue.** The remnant so often referred to by Isaiah, who served the Lord.

6. **For a spirit of judgment.** Of discerning the right, and governing with justice and equity. There is nothing like a supreme love of God, and trust in God, for clearing the mind and guiding the judgment. **For strength to them that turn the battle to** (R. V., "at") **the gate.** "These words are applied by all the later writers to those who drive the war back to the enemy's own gates, or, as it were, carry it into his own country. The two great requisites of civil government are here described as coming from Jehovah. The *Spirit* of this verse is not a mere *influence*, but God himself." — *Alexander.*

APPLICATION TO TEMPERANCE. God would persuade men to a life of temperance by showing not only the evils of intemperance, but the heavenly blessings of temperance. To those who are truly temperate, who bring every passion and appetite under the control of conscience and reason and the divine law, God will bring blessings beyond all that those who yield to appetite can conceive. His Spirit will guide the judgment, and make the life a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty. So it will be also to the community. And he will give strength to those who are fighting the battle of temperance. Although the enemy seem strong and bold and at our very gates, yet their hordes shall be driven back in defeat.

LESSON IX. — November 30.

GIDEON AND THE THREE HUNDRED. — Judges 7 : 1–8.

Study Judg. 6–8.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.* PSA. 118: 8.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

We have to-day one of the hero stories of early Hebrew history, which stirred the souls of the boys and young men of all the generations afterwards to deeds of heroism and courageous faith. From the hill be-

LEARN BY HEART.

1 Cor. 1: 26–29; Eph. 6: 10, 11.

THE SECTION

includes Judg. 6, 7, 8, with a glance at the preceding chapters.

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hind Nazareth which the boy Jesus doubtless often climbed, he could see in the southeast distance this scene of the people's distress and of Gideon's heroic victory.

This lesson is especially helpful because it brings to view not only the great deed done, but the way in which he grew able to do it. We can trace the upward steps. I never enjoyed biography till I read Hugh Miller's *My Schools and Schoolmasters*. Other biographies told us what the men and women had done, but did not show the road. Miller showed us the pathway to his great work, the training of men and events by which he became one of the foremost geologists of his time.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: God's Wonderful Deliverance.

Israel's life for two centuries.

I. SPIRITUAL AND MORAL DECLINE.

The scene. The decline.

II. RAVAGES OF THE MIDIANITE HORDES.

III. GIDEON CALLED TO DELIVER HIS PEOPLE.

Gideon. His call.

IV. GIDEON'S SCHOOLS AND SCHOOLMASTERS.

V. THE ASSEMBLING OF GIDEON'S ARMY (v. 1).

The situation. Esdraelon as a battlefield.

VI. THE FAMOUS THREE HUNDRED (vs. 2–7).

The two tests. The reasons for the test.

VII. THE GREAT VICTORY (v. 8).

VIII. PRACTICAL LESSONS.

PRONUNCIATIONS.

A'bĕl-mĕhō'lăh, A'bĭĕ'zer, A'bĭĕz'rite, Am'ălĕkites, Bā'ăl, Bĕth-bā'răh, Esdrăe'lŏn, Hā'rŏd, Jĕrŭb'băăl, Jĕz'rĕĕl, Jō'ăsh, Mĭd'ĭăn, Mĭd'ĭănites, Mō'rĕh, Năph'tălī, Oth'nĭĕl, Oph'răh, Zē'ĕb, Zĕr'ĕrăth.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. According to the common chronology, about B. C. 1222, two centuries after the conquest of Palestine.

Place. Gideon's home was in Ophrah, near Shechem. The gathering of his army was some distance to the north, at the fountain of Harod, near the hill Moreh. It was at the foot of Mount Gilboa, some fifteen or twenty miles southwest of the Sea of Galilee, and in the southern part of what in our Lord's time was called Galilee. It was near this place that Saul fought his last battle (1 Sam. 29: 1; 31: 1).

Ruth probably lived during the times of Gideon.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

Subjects to be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

Why Israel declined.
The punishment that followed.
Gideon.
His preparation.
Tests and helps to faith.
Why only three hundred were chosen.
Reason for the test.
God saving by a few.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

The Commentaries on Judges, referred to before. The late Professor Elmslie's *Expository Lectures* has one lecture on Gideon, which shows great insight. Prof. George Adam Smith's *Historical Geography* gives the best explanation of the choice of the three hundred. Lang's *Gideon and the Judges; Bible Characters*, Gideon to Absalom, by Alexander Whyte; Marcus Dods' *Israel's Iron Age;* R. Wheeler Bush on *Joshua and Judges;* Geikie's *Hours with the Bible;* Stanley's *Jewish Church;* E. Paxton Hood's *Lamps, Pitchers, and Trumpets; The Life of Gideon*, by John Bruce, D.D.; Plutarch's "Fabius Maximus" for a stratagem similar to Gideon's. In Carlyle's *Past and Present*, book III., chap. 2, is an extended simile drawn from Gideon's fleece.

ISRAEL'S LIFE FOR TWO CENTURIES. In Lesson VII. we had a general view of the two centuries before Gideon, — the successes, the moral defections and decadence following a religious decline, then outward troubles and disasters which led the people to see the evil of their ways, and to repent. Judges were raised up who delivered them. The effect of the suffering and of the deliverance, the mingled severity and goodness of God, preserved them in peace and prosperity for a generation, so that out of the two hundred years before Gideon there were but fifty-three years of oppression, including that from which Gideon delivered Israel, so that three-fourths of their history was prosperous in a greater or

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less degree. There was a lack of unity; even under Deborah but six tribes united. Ehud, Jael, Jephthah, Samson, show the rude state of justice, morals, and religious conceptions which prevailed among a portion of the people; while Deborah, Ruth, Gideon, and others show a deep religious devotion, and noble aims, however mistaken in some of their manifestations. Thus, in our day, the newspapers, filled with tragedies, accidents, deaths, and crimes, do not express the real life of the people; the doings in the slums do not show the real character of the age; nor do most of the stories which depict English or American life express the whole or the best truth.

After God, through Deborah and Barak, had saved the people from the oppression of the Lowlander Canaanites, they had a peaceful time of prosperity for forty years, at the close of which period another enemy overran the country, the deliverance from whom is the subject of to-day's lesson.

I. **The Spiritual and Moral Decline.** — THE SCENE was Esdraelon (the Greek form of Jezreel), a plain with Carmel on the southwest, the hills of Galilee on the north and northeast, and the mountainous country of Ephraim on the south. Into this vast inland plain, extending from the Mediterranean to the Jordan, are five gateways, one at the northwest, one towards the western end entering the Philistine country, one on the south toward Samaria, one running north towards the Sea of Galilee, and on the east over the Jordan through which the Midianite hordes, described in this lesson, entered. The great roads run through these passes. This was the most productive grain-growing region of the Holy Land. "Almost every acre," says Mr. Oliphant, "is at this moment in the highest state of cultivation." It looks to-day like a huge green lake of waving wheat, with its village-crowned mounds rising from it, like islands. It was "a land flowing with milk and honey." There were rich orchards, vineyards, olive groves, and gardens. Here in this garden has flourished the vine, the olive, and the fig, the oak, the hardy walnut, the myrtle, the almond, the pomegranate, the citron, the most beautiful fruit trees, flowering trees and shrubs, and aromatic plants with an infinite profusion of flowers. Here were found all the productions which made Italy rich and beautiful, and more. See Selah Merrill's *Galilee in the Time of Christ*. "The whole plain of Esdraelon, as well as part of the hills behind, is now owned by one rich firm of Syrian bankers, who draw an annual income of about two hundred thousand dollars from it." See *Haifa*, pp. 42, 59, 60. "A distinguished American traveler, speaking of a view of which Esdraelon is a leading feature, pronounces it the finest that he ever saw in any part of the world." — *John M. Lang, D.D.*

Such a beautiful land should have led the hearts of the people to devotion and love of the Giver of every good. And it is no wonder that it presented a great temptation to the Bedouins of the desert east of the Jordan.

THE DECLINE. As the former deliverance from the punishment for their sins faded in the passing years, the Israelites began again to decline, first in their religious life. "In some cases they inhabited the same towns, which thus became half-Canaanitish and half-Hebrew. Moreover, the Hebrews, for commerce and for agriculture, were brought into friendship with the Canaanites. Now in ancient days all transactions, either in commerce or in agriculture, involved the performance of religious rites on both sides. But it must often have happened that a Canaanitish shrine was nearer than Jehovah's altar, and the temptation would be great to let one rite performed in common do for both. You see how easy it must have been for the Hebrews to adopt the religion of the Canaanites also. Further, the almost inevitable splitting up of the people in a separate and detached communities, often dependent upon the Canaanitish neighboring commune, tended also to assimilate the Hebrews to the Canaanites in life and in worship." — *Professor Elmslie.* Religious decline was easily followed by "a condition of lassitude, sensuality, and impotence." They would easily fall into heathen morals and licentiousness. They would become less energetic, less courageous. They would "no longer be possessed by that extraordinary amount of zeal for a God who had revealed himself in a new and startling fashion, which is the only possible explanation of the triumph of Israel. Nothing but the firm conviction that one great supreme God had come, and was going to work on earth, compelling them to be his soldiers and servants in achieving a career of resplendent triumph in the world's history, could have made this nation do what it did." — *Professor Elmslie.*

II. **The Ravages of the Bedouins from beyond Jordan.** — This delightful spot is "an island in the midst of pirates, the Bedouin tribes, who are the Corsairs of the wilderness." — *Stanley.* The wandering hordes of the desert, the predominating power being the Midianites, who were the traveling merchant-men of the East, coveted the riches of this favored region which seemed the very gates of paradise; and to the number of at

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least one hundred and thirty-five thousand (Judg. 8: 10) "streamed over the fords of the Jordan year by year, migrating thither, with their households and herds, in such numbers as could only be compared, by those whom they invaded, to a flight of locusts; which, indeed, they rivaled in destructiveness." — *Geikie.* "They swept over almost the whole land, pitched their tents, and fed their camels in the midst of the rich cornfields of Israel. This was the most extensive and destructive servitude the nation had yet suffered. The people fled to mountain fastnesses, and hid themselves in caves, and a grievous famine ensued." — *Dean Milman.* All this continued for seven years (Judg. 6: 1). Of course, there were endless fights and skirmishes with the Midianites, and in them Gideon's brothers had been slain (Judg. 8: 18).

III. **Gideon called to be the Deliverer of his People.** — GIDEON. The name means "feller" or "hewer." He belonged to the clan of Abiezer, of the tribe of Manasseh. His father's name was Joash and he lived at Ophrah, not far from Shechem. He was a man of highly noble person, and of a noble race, like the son of a king, and whose brothers "each one resembled the children of a king" (Judg. 8: 18). He was a man of strong common sense, a patriot, a true lover of God, cautious, modest, brave, and enthusiastic. The signs of the fleece (Judg. 6: 36–40), says Ewald, illustrate Gideon's own character: warm and zealous, while all around were indifferent and cold; calm and cool, when all around were excited. Gideon was probably a middle-aged man at this time, for he had a son of his own almost grown up (Judg. 8: 20).

HIS CALL. One day Gideon was threshing wheat, not in the wheat-fields on the top of the windy hill, as was usual, but in the hollow of a wine-press cut out in a rock amid the vineyards, in order to escape the notice of the marauders, who came after the wheat which had just ripened, but would not be likely at that time to search the vineyards, for grapes were not yet ripe. An angel messenger from Jehovah came to Gideon thus employed, and sitting under an oak watched him for a while, and then bade him deliver Israel. The angel's words imply that he had in him both piety and heroism. God chooses fitting instruments for his work. "Like Cincinnatus at his farm, and David among his sheep, and Cromwell in the flats of Huntingdonshire, and Washington on his plantation in Virginia, Gideon was quietly doing his humble task, not wishing nor dreaming of a wider horizon or more conspicuous work, when the summons came to him, the divine Voice that dragged him from peaceful privacy and thrust him to the front."— *Alexander Maclaren, D.D.* Professor Elmslie thus modernizes the dialogue of Judg. 6: 12–16, "'God be with you!' said the stranger. Gideon flung down his flail. 'God be with us? Don't talk nonsense, man! Would I be skulking in this wine-press, would we Hebrews be cowering before those pagan Midianites, if God were with us? They say God was with us when we came out of Egypt, and that he did great miracles when Joshua conquered this land. Ah! if that is true, then he has gone away and left us now. Don't talk to me about God, when facts prove that there is no God with us.' What did the angel? He looked at him, knew he was wrong in blaming God in that fashion, but also that he was right to refuse to accept a religion that had lost all its nobility and bravery, that had no backbone in it. The angel said: 'Go in this thy might, thy spirit that cannot tolerate this degradation of God's people, that rises against this wrong; go thou, and be the leader in Jehovah's name, and set things right.'"

NOTE 1. "Here was the hero's opportunity, for there are always in a healthy nation heroes lying in wait for opportunity. . . . I think one of the most pathetic things in the world's history is that so often men of magnificent heroic character have lived in times when they had no chance to show it." — *Elmslie.*

> "Full many a gem of purest ray serene
> The dark, unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
> Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
> And waste its sweetness on the desert air."
> — *Gray.*

2. Like Gideon, "prophets and law-givers and God's heroes ever shrink from great tasks, and are humbled, not exalted, when large fields of service open before them. It is the spirit in which alone true work for God is ever done."

3. Gideon had the wise caution to make himself sure that he was called of God before he went on with his work. True, strong faith wants a sure foundation on which to stand. It is credulity, not faith, which accepts things as true without thorough examination and proof.

4. This work to which Gideon was called was practically a revival of religion. All

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1. Then [1] Jē-rŭb'bă-ăl, who *is* Gĭd'e-on, and all the people that *were* with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the *well* spring of Hā'rod: *so that the host of the* and the camp of Mid'i-an-ites *were* Mid'i-an *was* on the north side of them, by the hill of Mō'reh, in the valley.

[1] Judg. 6: 32.

through this history we see that the object was to bring the people back to the love and service of God, and to holier lives.

IV. **Gideon's Schools and Schoolmasters.** — One proof that a man is called to a great work is his willingness to undergo the necessary preparation.

1. A prophet was sent to warn and prepare the people. Not till they repented could there be safety. Otherwise God would have rewarded disobedience and encouraged it.

2. All Gideon's previous faithfulness in daily life, his unselfishness, his piety, had been preparing him unconsciously for the great work of his life. By daily duties done from worthy motives we are prepared for our life's work. Life is ennobled by doing even the smallest actions with the noblest motives.

> "We rise by things that are under our feet,
> By what we have mastered of good and gain,
> By the pride deposed, and the passion slain,
> And the vanquished ills that we hourly meet."

3. He was prepared by religious worship. In the house of God, in pure religious devotion, is found the atmosphere which inspires the soul, corrects the judgment, clears the vision, leads to right decisions. The house of God is not only the gate of heaven, but the gate to the best deeds and the largest usefulness.

4. He was prepared for his larger work by a lesser duty which required the same qualities, and which tested his fitness, awoke in him a consciousness of his own possibilities, through the aid of God, strengthened his faith in God, and proved the weakness of the gods on which Israel's enemies depended. Gideon had a work to do in his own village and in his father's house. That very night he bravely threw down the altar of Baal. And not only cut down the pillar of Ashtaroth, but split it up for fuel; and, having laid it on the altar of Jehovah, used it to consume, in sacrifice to him, a bullock which his father had apparently consecrated to Baal. Gideon's action was like that of the brave Hawaiian princess Kapiolani, who defied the very home of the idols her people worshiped, on the brink of a terrible volcano. The citizens were angry when they discovered what Gideon had done, and would have put him to death, but his father's clever irony saved him. This test was both for himself, to give him confidence, and as a proof to the Israelites that he had the qualities of a leader in God's service. So David knew for himself and could prove to others that he could meet Goliath, by having first slain the lion and the bear.

5. Gideon tested the promises of God, so that his faith was strengthened by God's answer to his prayer in the matter of the fleece, as Aaron and Moses were encouraged by the rod changed to a serpent, to go before Pharaoh and do great wonders at the word of the Lord.

V. **The Assembling of Gideon's Army.** — V. 1. Gideon blew his trumpet and first gathered his own clan into the nucleus of an army. Then he sent messengers through his own tribe of Manasseh, in the region of Samaria, and omitting Issachar who dwelt in Esdraelon, then held by the Midianites, summoned the three northern tribes of Zebulon, Asher, and Naphtali who occupied what later was called northern Galilee. His summons reminds us of the beautiful custom of ancient Scotland of assembling their clans by means of the *fiery cross*. A light cross of wood was charred at its point, and the flames quenched in the blood of a goat. This was sent around to the villages and homes of the clan, each one sending it on to his next neighbor, with only the name of the meeting-place. And every one was bound under fearful anathemas to obey the sign. The summons was swift and sure.

> "When flits this cross from man to man,
> Vich Alpine's summons to his clan,
> Burst be the ear that fails to heed!
> Palsied the foot that shuns to speed!"

Thirty-two thousand were assembled to meet the one hundred and thirty-five thousand Midianites, not quite one to four.

THE SITUATION. 1. **Jerubbaal, who is Gideon.** *Jerubbaal* means "Let Baal plead" his own cause, "the antagonist of Baal," and was given to Gideon because he

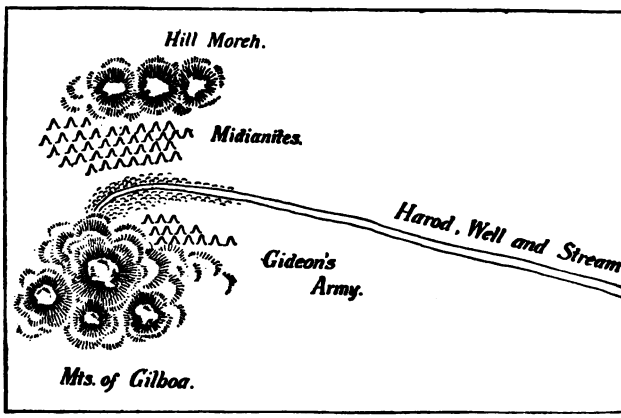
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2. And the LORD said unto Gĭd'e-on, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Mĭd'ĭ-an-ītes into their hands, lest Is'ra-el [1] vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me.

3. Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, [2] Whosoever is fearful and afraid, trembling, let him return and depart early from mount Gĭl'e-ăd. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.

[1] Deut. 8: 17; Isa. 10: 13; 1 Cor. 1: 29. [2] Deut. 20: 8.

destroyed the altar of Baal in his own town of Ophrah. **Pitched** their camp **beside the well** (or "spring") **of Harod**, at the eastern end of the plain of Esdraelon. Here is a broad, green valley sloping to the Jordan. Its southern boundary is the Mountain of Gilboa. At the foot of this mountain as it slopes into the valley there bursts forth the living spring of Harod, forming a stream 15 feet broad and 2 feet deep. "The deep bed and soft banks of this stream constitute a formidable ditch in front of the position on Gilboa (where the Israelites were encamped), and make it possible for the defenders of the latter to hold the spring at their feet in the face of an enemy on the plain," especially as the banks are lined with reeds and bushes. It was a wisely chosen position, both for defense and for the sake of the water, for there is no other living water near. On the other side of this stream and desirous to use it for drinking and defense, lay the **host of the Midianites . . . on the north side . . . by the hill of Moreh**, as it slopes toward **the valley**.



THE BATTLES FOUGHT IN ESDRAELON. "The plain of Esdraelon has, in all ages, been the battlefield of Palestine. Here fought Thothmes III., Rameses II., and Rameses III.; here Pharaoh Necho won that sad battle of Megiddo, in which King Josiah was slain, amidst a slaughter so terrible that the great conflict of the Apocalypse is called, from it, the battle of Armageddon, *i. e.*, 'the hill of Megiddo.' Here have fought, in turn, the armies of Assyria, of the Crusaders, and of Bonaparte; and it was on the mountains of Gilboa, at its east end, that Saul and Jonathan perished." — *Geikie.*

VI. **The Famous Three Hundred.** — Vs. 2–7. **2. And the Lord said unto Gideon** (in what way we do not know), **The people . . . are too many**, etc. Since the object of this deliverance was not chiefly to save the people's farms and crops from the Midianites, but to save them from their sins, and to teach them to trust and obey God, the method of gaining the victory must be such as to produce this effect. For the victory would amount to very little unless it taught the people that all their hope was in God and in obeying him, and thus led them to trust in the power and goodness of God, and to cleave to him as their only Saviour.

THE FIRST TEST. **3. Proclaim . . . Whosoever is fearful.** It would not be strange that the comparatively peaceful people, without special army organization, should be afraid to meet in battle such wild and warlike hordes, four times their own number. **Let him . . . depart.** "In a situation like that the only hope of victory is by stratagem, and stratagem does not need quantity of soldiers, it needs quality. Every man must have his wits about him and be no coward. Therefore Gideon thinned out his army, and everybody

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4. And the LORD said unto Gĭd'e-on, The people *are* yet *too* many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, *that* of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go.

5. So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gĭd'e-on, every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.

6. And the number of them that lapped, *putting* their hand to their mouth, *were* three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water.

7. And the LORD said unto Gĭd'e-on, [1] By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Mĭd'ĭ-an-ītes into thine hand: and let all the *other* people go every man unto his place.

[1] 1 Sam. 14: 6.

afraid or half-hearted had to retire from the critical scene." — *Elmslie.* **There returned of the people twenty and two thousand.** Two-thirds of his small army. This showed that the people needed to learn the lesson of trust and obedience. They did not have time to retire very far, and they were able to help pursue the fleeing Midianites after the battle.

SECOND TEST. **4. The people are yet too many.** To produce the desired moral effect; and also "far too many for stratagem. They are all plucky fellows, but they may not all be clever fellows. He wants both courageous and capable men." — *Elmslie.* **I will try them.** Separate them, "remove the inferior elements which are not fit for the high enterprise. The figure is taken from the refining of the precious metals by smelting out the baser admixture of the ore." — *Professor Moore.* The ten thousand were brought down to the stream flowing between the armies, to drink.

5. Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth . . . putting their hand to their mouth (v. 6), using their hands as a dog uses his tongue. Three hundred "did not break rank or stop in their march, but dipped their hollowed palm into the stream, and tossed a little in their mouth as they ran," "as a dog, running along the bank of a shallow stream, and without stopping, snatches mouthfuls or tonguefuls of water, too intent on his pursuit to take a leisurely drink, never even while slaking his thirst turning aside or pausing from the chase." — *Marcus Dods.*

6. All the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink. "The majority of them unbuckled their swords and eased their armor, and knelt down to drink." — *Elmslie.*

7. By the three hundred men . . . will I save you. God did it, through these fitting instruments thus selected.

HOW DID THIS TEST SHOW THEIR FITNESS? Several reasons have been given, for God's tests are not arbitrary: —

1. George Adam Smith, in his *Historical Geography*, shows one reason from the natural surroundings. Gideon's army were on one side of the stream, and the enemy on the other, and how near some scouting parties might be, was unknown, for the reeds and shrubs along the banks afforded ample cover for hostile ambushes. Those who bowed down, drinking headlong, did not appreciate their position or the foe; while the others, who merely crouched, lapping up the water with one hand, while they held their weapons in the other, were aware of their danger, and ready against surprise. Thus the three hundred showed exactly the qualities needed for the night attack which a few careless men might spoil.

2. *Experience.* The three hundred showed more of the spirit of soldiers eager for the battle. They had, doubtless, experience either in the soldier's life, or in labors that required strength, courage, and endurance.

3. *Physical strength.* "The service required lightness of foot, strength and suppleness of muscle, keenness of the senses, unbounded nerve, self-control, and a habit of wariness that should never for an instant be off-guard. Without such qualities, how could these men get to their proper places around the camp of Midian without being observed? How

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8. So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all (*the rest of* the men of) Is'ra-el every man unto his tent, (*and* but) retained (*those* the) three hundred men: and the (*host* camp) of Mĭd'ĭ-an was beneath him in the valley.

could they hold themselves to their proper duties, after the action began, and continue to wave their torches and blow their trumpets, instead of either fighting somebody, or else running away? The test by which they had been selected was very simple, and yet admirably adapted to secure just such men. Not every man is physically able to stand by a spring and stoop and toss the water into his mouth with his hand, as a dog does with his tongue; and the hunter or shepherd who is in the habit of drinking in this way, instead of kneeling down to drink, is the one who is never off his guard, not even while he drinks." — *Professor Beecher.*

COMPARE the three hundred at the gates of Thermopylæ, and Ethan Allen, before Fort Ticonderoga, offering, to all who wished, free permission to remain behind and not enter upon the dangerous attack, as stated in the story of *The Green Mountain Boys.*

VII. **The Great Victory.** — V. 8. **So the people took victuals,** etc. "This verse is rather obscure. A better sense is got by following the punctuation of the Septuagint and Chaldee versions: '*And they* (the three hundred) *took the victuals and trumpets of the people* (*all the people* of v. 7) *into their hands;*' *i. e.*, as Jerome expresses by adding *pro numero*, as many of them as they required, so that each of the three hundred should have a trumpet and a pitcher. This explains how the three hundred came to have each a trumpet and a pitcher and a lamp. Gideon took them from the whole army of nine thousand and seven hundred men before he dismissed them." — *Cook.* **Their trumpets.** Trumpets were not usually in the hands of common soldiers, nor were lamps, or rather, torches. These belonged only to leaders, so that each of the three hundred would appear to the Midianites as a leader of a large band. The pitchers were to cover the torches from being seen, making a dark lantern. They also aided confusion by the noise of their breaking. **All the rest** of the ten thousand remained in their tents, ready to help when the time came.



Lamp, Pitcher, and Trumpet.

1. First Gideon visited the camp of the Midianites, and heard some of their soldiers tell a dream of a little barley cake overthrowing a tent, and the interpretation of it, as meaning that the little band of Gideon should overthrow the Midianite host.

2. Then the three hundred in the night divided into three bands, and silently surrounded the Midianites. Each soldier had a lamp or torch, a pitcher in which he placed it while marching, and a trumpet. Suddenly, at a signal from Gideon, each one took out his lamp, smashed the pitchers with a crashing noise, shouted, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon," and blew the trumpets. It seemed to the Midianites that there were three hundred leaders each with a company behind him; and they began to destroy one another, thinking they were enemies. All the Israelites had to do was to hold their lamps and keep blowing their trumpets, and shouting, as if an army were behind them. "Keil gives several instances of such stratagems from ancient and modern history. Hannibal extricated himself in a similar manner, when surrounded by Fabius. See Plutarch, *Fabius Maximus*, 6. 6. Niebuhr relates how in the last century an Arab chief escaped from a fortress in which he was besieged by a vastly superior force, through the employment of the same means as we here find employed by Gideon." — *Cambridge Bible.* The result was a complete rout of the enemy, and deliverance from their raids for a long time, while Gideon became the judge of Israel for forty years.

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VIII. **Some Practical Lessons.** — 1. So God's church during the ages has been exposed to many assaults from the world; sometimes the worldly spirit has overrun it; sometimes the hordes of false doctrines, of dead forms, of ungodly ease, have sought to plunder its treasures. So "the holy land" of each soul, where God should be king, has often been overrun by wrong thoughts, ambitions, lusts of the flesh, hatred, indolence, selfishness. These devastate God's heritage.

2. A real revival of religion in the heart, inspiring some great leaders and workers with the power of the Holy Spirit, with faith and courage and wisdom and enthusiasm, is the great power for redeeming the church and the nation, awakening repentance for sin, and a deep sense of the need of God and salvation.

3. The same truth applies to the victory over sin in the individual soul. The Holy Spirit awakening new life, inspiring love and faith and consecration, can do wonders in redeeming us from sin, evil thoughts, bad habits, and a wrong life.

4. The value and power of God's people are to be found not so much in numbers as in quality.

5. "Many who have real faith and grace are unfit for special services, and unable to bear peculiar trials, from which, therefore, the Lord will exempt them, and to which he will appoint those to whom he has given superior hardiness, boldness, and firmness of spirit." — *Scott.*

6. In the Christian warfare the *trumpets* express our power of speaking for God. The *lamps* are our character and example, lighted by God's grace, and shining for men; and the *pitchers* represent our capacity of receiving the truth and the spirit of God. Thus armed, the Christian can enter upon the warfare against evil with the certainty of victory.

7. God can conquer by a few as well as by many. But the story of Gideon does not teach that he cares nothing for means adapted to the end. Gideon had faith, but he used his forces in the best way, and selected the three hundred because of their adaptation to the special service required, and accomplished his victory by the wisest use of means, with the least loss.

LESSON X. — December 7.

RUTH AND NAOMI. — Ruth 1 : 16–22.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***Be kindly affectioned one to another.*** — ROM. 12: 10.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

"We have had this fine incident as a Sunday-school lesson, pretty regularly, once in seven years. For nine-tenths of us, I believe, the very best treatment of the lesson, this time around, would be to read the book carefully in the revised version a sufficient number of times, and then tell the story one to another, trying to see which could tell it most correctly, noting a few explanatory points here and there, and closing with a careful repetition of the memory verses, as containing the great ethical lesson of the book." — *Prof. Willis J. Beecher.*

Note how this story adds some beautiful features to the picture of the times we find in the Judges. It throws a charming light over those troublous times. Instead of wars and degeneracy, we see piety, love, consecration, happy family life, and domestic virtues. It enables us to see how the nation was on the whole growing better, since in the most degenerate times there was pre-

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 16, 17; Mark 10: 29, 30.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. Keil, with great probability, places Ruth in the time of Gideon, B. C. 1222–1182. King David, her great-grandson, was born 1085, which fact, even if there are no generations omitted, may bring her place back to Gideon's period.

Place. The early home of Naomi and the later one of Ruth was at Bethlehem, around which so many interesting events cluster.

The early home of Ruth was in Moab, east of the Dead Sea and southern Jordan.

Author. — The author and date of the book are unknown.

The Names. — Elimelech, "My God is King"; Naomi, "the Lovable"; and their two sons, Mahlon, "the Sickly," and

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served underneath the troubled surface many a pure, loving, religious life, as in the time of Elijah, when the prophet felt that he was the only servant of God in all Israel, while the Lord knew that there were seven thousand who refused to bow the knee to Baal.

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Biblical Idyls, a volume of the *Modern Reader's Bible*, gives this story in good form. But, as to Ruth, its best value is in the introduction upon Biblical idyls and their nature. "Ruth the Gleaner," *Women of the Bible*, by eminent divines (1900); *Ruth the Moabitess*, by Henry Moorhouse; *Ruth and Esther*, by Dr. Wm. M. Taylor; *Gleanings from the Book of Ruth*; Aubrey Price's *Six Lectures on Ruth*; Thomas Fuller on *Ruth*; George Lawson's *Lectures on Ruth*; Stephen Tyng's *The Rich Kinsman*; W. Braden's *Beautiful Gleaner*; Bishop Oxenden's *Story of Ruth*; Samuel Cox's *Book of Ruth*; Dr. Andrew Thomson's *Home Life in Ancient Palestine*; Charles H. H. Wright's *Book of Ruth in Hebrew*; Edward Topsell's *Reward of Religion*, or *Lectures upon the Book of Ruth*; Richard Bernard's *Ruth's Recompense*; *Sermon* by President Edwards; Stanley's *Jewish Church*, lect. 13.

PRONUNCIATIONS.

Bō'ăz, Chĭl'ĭŏn or Chĭlĭ'ŏn (ch=k), Ĕlĭm'ĕlĕch, Mā'ră, Măh'lŏn, Nāŏ'mī or Nā'ŏmi, Or'păh, Rūth.

Chilion, "the Pining One"; Ruth, "the Friend," or "Beauty," or "Rose of Moab"; Orpah, a "Fawn"; Boaz, "Lovely," or "Active."

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

Subjects to be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

The book of Ruth as throwing light on the Judges.
Naomi.
Orpah's choice.
Ruth's choice.
Her reward.
In what ways virtue is rewarded.

LESSON OUTLINE.

THE BIBLICAL IDYL OF RUTH.

SUBJECT: Ruth's Choice.

I. THE EMIGRANTS (vs. 1–5).

A pastoral scene.

II. THE PARTING. RUTH'S CHOICE (vs. 6–17).

Orpah's choice.
Ruth's choice.

III. THE EMIGRANTS RETURN AND WELCOME (vs. 18–22).

IV. THE REWARD.

Condensation of the rest of the book.

V. LESSONS FROM THE STORY OF RUTH.

A BIBLICAL IDYL IN A SERIES OF SCENES.

"Idyl" is a diminutive term, partly suggesting "the fragmentary and miscellaneous character of the poems." Thus Pliny uses the word "Idyls" as synonymous with "eclogues," "selections," "the term used by the Greek for what we should call 'Elegant Extracts.' But the diminutive term seems also to suggest the homely matter of idyl poetry, the simplicity of theme that contrasts with the grandeur supposed to be proper for the themes of epic, lyric, and dramatic. . . . Usage seems to indicate that idyl poetry treats not war, nor heroic actions, nor even love as an enthralling passion, but the domestic details of shepherd life, love as a social incident." Thus Tennyson's *Idyls of the King* consists of independent episodes, and mingles "the heroic achievements of Arthur and his knights with the treatment of love and domestic relations." So when Wagner intermingles in his "*Siegfried*, a romantic epic of ponderous grandeur," a traditional cradle song as "a serenade for his wife, in honor of their infant child, the exquisite morsel is appropriately named *The Siegfried Idyl*." — *Condensed from Professor Moulton's Introduction to his Biblical Idyls.* It is thus that the book of Ruth comes into the history of wars and heroes as a most beautiful idyl, "which has done more to enable us to live over again in remote Hebrew antiquity than all the heroic achievements of *Joshua* and *Judges* together." — *Professor Moulton.* We seem to pass, so to speak, "from the dark terrific scenes of a tragedy of Æschylus to the fresh and beautiful landscapes of some pastoral idyl of Theocritus." — *R. Wheeler Bush.*

"The book of Ruth is like some beautiful landscape of Claude, with its soft mellow hues of quiet eventide and the peaceful expanse of its calm lake, placed side by side with some stern picture of Salvator Rosa, exhibiting the shock of armies and the storm of war."

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16. And Ruth said, [1] Intreat me not to leave thee, or and to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: [2] thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:

[1] 2 Kings 2: 2. [2] Ruth 2: 11, 12.

Scene I. The Emigrants. — Ruth 1: 1–6. Some time during the period of the Judges, under Gideon or later, there arose a famine in Judea which lasted in some degree for several years. It may have been caused partly by the raids of the Philistines, such as occurred there at the time of Samson (Judg. 13: 1), and such as that of the Midianites, the overwhelming scourge of the plain of Esdraelon, in our last lesson.

At this time there lived a family at Bethlehem consisting of Elimelech, his wife Naomi, and two sons, whose names indicate feeble health. Finding it difficult to obtain a living on the home farm on account of the famine, and perhaps afraid of the roving bands of the invaders, the family determined to emigrate to some safer and more fruitful region, even though it would compel them to bring up their children amid heathen surroundings. They went across the Jordan, probably at the fords of Jericho, turned to the south along the eastern shores of the Dead Sea, and settled among the rich fields of the Moabites. Here great changes came to the family. In the course of ten years the sons married Moabitish women, Ruth and Orpah; and both sons and Elimelech, their father, died in the land of Moab, leaving the three women widows.

The widow Naomi, poor, in distress, among strangers, became homesick for her native land, her kindred, the people of God, and the religious aids and consolations of her youth. "As the heart panteth after the water brooks," so panted her soul for the living God and her childhood's home. Everything here reminded her of her loss. "The measure of her misery was pressed down, shaken together, running over."

This is truth the poet sings,
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things. — *Tennyson.*

The famine was over. One of the periods of revival and prosperity was shedding its benediction over the land from which she came, and she resolved to return.

"I see not a step before me as I tread the days of the year,
But the past is still in God's keeping, the future his mercy shall clear;
And what looks dark in the distance may brighten as I draw near.

"So I go on not knowing. I would not if I might;
I would rather walk in the dark with God than go alone in the light;
I would rather walk with him by faith than walk alone by sight."

Scene II. The Parting. Ruth's Choice. — Vs. 6–18. The two widowed daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth ("the Rose of Moab"), went part of the way to see Naomi off, as friends and relatives were accustomed to do, and as is still the custom in the East. When the time came to part, when they had kissed each other and wept together, they both declared they would not return, but would go with her to Israel. "Like a wise woman, she declined to take advantage of the impulse of passionate regret, which seemed adverse to their temporal welfare, and which their cooler judgment might not sanction, and urged them, by many strong arguments, to return. Once more they wept, but Orpah was prevailed upon, and gave Naomi the farewell kiss." — *Kitto.* "She had been enlightened by Naomi concerning the difference in habits, customs, and hopes of Israel, but now she preferred her own tastes and education and prospects. The saddest thing of all is that if we think of her any more as a praying woman, we must picture her as worshiping the savage Chemosh, in rites of dangerous idolatry." — *C. S. Robinson.* And yet we do not know but she clung to the religion Naomi had taught her, and was a light shining in a dark place. Naomi used the same arguments to Ruth that she did to Orpah. "God wrestled with Jacob with desire to be conquered; so Naomi, no doubt, opposed Ruth, hoping and wishing that she herself might be foiled." — *T. Fuller.* She would have Ruth fully understand her own mind, and realize what the decision would cost her. So in the parable of Christ (Luke 14: 26–33): It is plain that Naomi's personal character and her teachings, shining out through the night of sorrow, had commended to her family and neighbors the religion of the true God.

16. And Ruth said. "Ruth's passionate burst of tenderness is immortal." "Like David's lament over Jonathan, these words have sunk deep into the human heart."

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17. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: [1] the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.

18. [2] When she saw that she [a] was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.

[1] 1 Sam. 3: 17; 2 Sam. 19: 13; 2 Kings 6: 31. [2] Acts 21: 14. [a] Hebrew, *strengthened herself.*

Professor Moulton arranges Ruth's words in the form of poetry: —

THE SONG OF LIFE'S DEVOTION.

"Entreat me not to leave thee,
And to return from following after thee;
For whither thou goest, I will go;
And where thou lodgest, I will lodge;
Thy people shall be my people;
And thy God my God;
Where thou diest I will die,
And there will I be buried:
The Lord do so to me,
And more also,
If aught but death part thee and me."

Intreat me not to leave thee, for the very reason that she is old and poor and childless. Their hearts are knit together like the souls of David and Jonathan. The two remind us of Damon and Pythias.

"I am constant as the northern star,
Of whose true, fixed, and resting quality
There is no fellow in the firmament." — *Shakespeare.*

"True as the needle to the pole,
True as the branches to the vine."

Whither thou goest, I will go. "Compare the very similar entreaties of Elijah, and the steadfast determination of Elisha not to leave him (2 Kings 2: 2-6). In Elisha's case, as in Ruth's, the reward of steadfast persistence was very great." — *Cook.* **Thy people shall be my people,** even though she went apparently to lifelong poverty among strangers. But the blessedness that people had in the true God was infinitely greater than that she left, and transformed the dark clouds as the sun does with his setting glories. **And thy God my God.** She accepted the true religion, as it shone in the example and teachings of her mother-in-law.

In thus cleaving to her poor old mother-in-law, and going with her from home and country into a strange land, Ruth shows that she was a heroine. Her heroism was of the home, of daily life, of love. She was "not a prophetess like Deborah; not a queen like Esther; but a simple Moabitish maiden, a gleaner in the harvest fields, strong in her own simple purity. She is no saint, no devotee, no prophetess, but a very woman, and a woman"

"Not too bright and good
For human nature's daily food." — *Wordsworth.*

17. **The Lord do so to me,** calling upon herself the severest punishment if she should break her promise. Ruth's use of the name of Jehovah shows that she was already a believer.

18. **Was steadfastly minded,** "in making herself firm to go with her." — *Beecher.* **She left speaking unto her.** She had wanted her to go with her, but it seemed selfish to permit her. But she yielded at last to Ruth's steadfast determination.

RUTH'S CHOICE. "Ruth had everything to lose by clinging to Naomi, and nothing to gain but the delight of being beside her. On the one side were a life's habits, friends, kindred, the possibility of a bright future of "rest in the house of her husband." She was plunging into unknown conditions, and had only the prospect of sharing the monotonous, poverty-stricken solitude of a sad old woman. But her gentle spirit was as brave as gentle, and the sweet lips poured out that torrent of devoted love which has found echoes in so many happy lovers' hearts." — *Maclaren* in *S. S. Times.* (1) Like Mary, she chose the good part; she made the best possible choice. (2) She chose in full view of all the consequences. It was a well-considered choice. (3) Her choice was of spiritual good, of right and duty and religion, at the cost of poverty and friendlessness and toil. (4) She was led to her choice of the God and religion through human affection. (5) She chose irrevocably. It was a life choice.

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19. So they two went until they came to Bĕth'-lĕ-hĕm. And it came to pass, when they were come to Bĕth'-lĕ-hĕm, that [1] all the city was moved about them, and *the women* said, [2] *Is* this Nā-ō'mī?

20. And she said unto them, Call me not [a] Nā-ō'mī, call me [b] Mā'rā: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.

21. I went out full, [3] and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why *then* call ye me Nā-ō'mī, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?

22. So Nā-ō'mī returned, and Ruth the Mō'ab-īt-ess, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Mō'ab: and they came to Bĕth'-lĕ-hĕm [4] in the beginning of barley harvest.

[1] Matt. 21: 10. [2] Isa. 23: 7; Lam. 2: 15. [3] Job 1: 21. [4] Ex. 9: 31, 32; Ruth 2: 23; 2 Sam. 21: 9.

a That is, *Pleasant*. *b* That is, *Bitter*.

III. **The Emigrant's Return and Welcome.**—Vs. 19–22. **19. They two . . . came to Bethlehem,** the early home of Naomi, where she had a small estate (Ruth 4: 3). **All the city,** a small walled village (Micah 5: 2), **was moved,** excited and interested, **about them.** She had belonged to a prominent family, and as probably little or nothing had been heard from her for ten years, her return was a glad surprise. **And they** (feminine), the women of Bethlehem, **said, Is this Naomi?** Can this lonely, traveled-stained woman be the Naomi who went away so happily ten years ago?



From a Photograph by Bonfils.

Bethlehem. In the Field of Boaz.

20. Call me not Naomi, "lovable," "pleasant." That name once belonged to me. **Call me Mara,** "bitter" (Ex. 15: 23), for this better expresses my condition. **For the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.** My life is in his hands. He has given me this bitter medicine for my soul. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord."

21. The Lord hath testified against me, that my going away into a heathen land for a better living was a sin. I lacked faith in his promises, and I have fared worse than if I had remained at home.

22. In the beginning of barley harvest, usually about the middle of April. This fact was an essential circumstance in Ruth's future life.

IV. **The Reward.**—The rest of the book tells in a delightful way the story of the effect upon her life of self-denying love to her mother-in-law, and to her God. The harvest time suggested to Ruth how she might help support her Naomi for a time. "Primitive life in the most diverse countries has much in common; if nowhere else, we have learned from *Lorna Doone* what harvest time can be like in an agricultural community; how the homesteads combine, reap each farm in succession, with solemn ceremony and noisy mirth, gleaning women following the reapers with gay laughter, while hours of rest bring the common meal and good fellowship."—*Professor Moulton.* Thus Ruth not only

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(1) supported the family, but (2) she won the respect and favor of the people among whom she lived. (3) She gained a most excellent husband and home. "In Boaz we have a model for the character of a rich man in private life: we see one whose deep faith in God breaks out in every word of his lips and every action of his life (Ruth 2: 4, 11, 12; 3: 10, 11, etc.); one attentive to his own business and diligent in the care of his own property (Ruth 2: 4; 3: 2); kind and friendly to his dependents, and beloved by them (Ruth 2: 4); liberal, generous, and courteous to the poor and friendless stranger (Ruth 2: 8, 9, 14, 15, 16)." — *Cook*. (4) Ruth had the honor of including among her descendants the great kings David and Solomon, and, above all, Jesus the Christ, through his mother.

Still, we are to be careful not to confound outward rewards with the real reward of virtue. As "Love in loving finds its joy," as the Savoyard singer, neglected and forgotten, declares that

> "The song itself shall yet reward
> The labors of the Savoyard,"

so virtue contains in itself, in the approval of God, in peace of conscience, in spiritual life and character, in helpfulness and service, its best reward. And yet the reward is not perfect without outward conditions to match the inward grace. So it shall be in heaven.

> "Virtue without success
> Is a fair picture shown by an ill light." — *Dryden*.

LESSONS FROM THE STORY OF RUTH. 1. Here is a beautiful example of God's providential care over private affairs of an humble family. God is "no respecter of persons." Often from the humblest homes spring persons who influence the destiny of nations.

2. Orpah and Ruth, starting together for the Promised Land, and one returning to idolatry, while the other goes on to immortal blessedness, is paralleled by the characters in the early part of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, where Christian and his neighbors start together for the Celestial City. Christian goes on, while Obstinate and Pliable soon return to the City of Destruction. "Orpah has had many brothers and sisters who have put their hand to the plow and looked back." "'It might have been,' and 'it was not,' — that sums up the tragedy of many a life."

3. All this passionate utterance of Ruth is a perfect type of what every one who becomes a Christian says to Christ and his church. He chooses them for better or for worse, in prosperity and in affliction. All he has and all he hopes for is joined with them. He will suffer with them, rejoice with them, work with them, worship with them, and at last abide forever with them in heaven.

4. A large part of the opposition to our serving the Lord, whether it arise from friends or enemies, will cease when it becomes manifest that we are invincibly determined on our course. It is against the young and undecided — those who are in the process of forming their opinions — that Satan and his emissaries wage their severest warfare. Those on the borders between two armies suffer most from the war. Much opposition will cease when we openly avow our choice, and it has been shown that we are fixed and immovable in it.

5. Choices between good and evil, even in small things, are the most important acts of our lives. They are the creative acts of the soul. Often these fateful crises come in our lives in connection with decisions, of the importance of which we do not dream. We know what is right, we do not know the far-reaching effects. More frequently in choices than anywhere else do we meet the

> "tide in the affairs of men
> Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
> Omitted, all the voyage of their life
> Is bound in shallows and in miseries."

> "So from the heights of will
> Life's parting stream descends,
> And, as a moment turns its slender rill,
> Each widening torrent bends.
>
> "From the same cradle side,
> From the same mother's knee,
> One to long darkness and the frozen tide,
> One to the peaceful sea."

6. "Ruth's choice cost her something, — separation from her kindred, the sacrifice of her prospects of marriage, expatriation, poverty, and the consciousness that the course she was taking was unusual, and would cause remark. She was a sensitive woman, and deeply felt the situation. This is shown by her weeping (Ruth 1: 9, 14). However courageous she may have been, she was lonely and homesick. We have one or two pathetic glimpses

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into her soul: 'Seeing I am a foreigner' (Ruth 2: 10); 'Though I be not as one of thine handmaidens' (Ruth 2: 13). She had sufficient reasons, however, and these sustained her, — her love for Naomi, Naomi's need of her, but, above all, her consciousness that Israel's God was worthy to be chosen. She chose deliberately, and not blindly, freely and yet firmly." — *Professor Beecher* in *S. S. Times.*

7. "But Ruth's choice teaches us that true love is supremely desirous of the beloved presence. That is true about human love, and it is true about heavenly. If we have any real love to God, nothing will be so sweet as to feel him near, and we shall never be so blessed as when we are near him. A lover who did not care to be with the beloved would be a strange monster. What of a friend of God who has no delight in communion?" — *Maclaren.*

"Blest with this fellowship divine,
Take what thou wilt, I'll ne'er repine;
E'en as the branches to the vine,
My soul would cling to thee.

"Far from her home, fatigued, oppressed,
Here she has found her place of rest;
An exile still, yet not unblessed,
While she can cling to thee."
— *Mrs. Elliot.*

8. Through doing her humble daily duties faithfully for the support of her mother and herself, Ruth found her reward in her character and her destiny.

LESSON XI. — December 14.

THE BOY SAMUEL. — 1 Samuel 3: 6–14.

Study 1 Sam. 3: 1–14. **Read 1 Sam. 1–3.**

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***Speak Lord; for thy servant heareth.*** — 1 SAM. 3: 9.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

We now come to another marked epoch in the history of Israel.

The period of the Judges is about to close, and a new movement begin.

And a man is raised up as the instrument of the change, — Samuel, the last of the Judges, and the first of the new line of the prophets under whom begins the reign of the Kings.

Also, we have an interesting study of child life; and of the development of the child into a noble religious man.

Study the times in which Samuel lived.

Make a Character Study of Samuel, of Eli, of Eli's two sons.

Learn what you can of family life, and its influences, as presented in these three chapters.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

Subjects to be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

Religious condition of the times.
Samuel.
The books of Samuel.
His home influences.
Value of routine labor as an education.
How God calls us.
The new life, how begun.

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 7–10; Matt. 19: 4; Eccl. 12: 1.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: The Childhood of a Great and Good Man.

THE HISTORICAL SITUATION.
The books of Samuel.
Contemporary history.
Religious condition of the times.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A BOY INTO A GODLY MAN.

I. SAMUEL.
II. HIS ANCESTRAL INHERITANCE.
III. HIS HOME INFLUENCES.
IV. HIS DEDICATION TO GOD.
V. RELIGIOUS INFLUENCES.
VI. RESISTING TEMPTATION.
VII. THREE PHASES OF RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT.
Routine labor faithfully performed.
The call of God awakening his soul.
Obedience, a new life begun.

PRONUNCIATIONS.

A′phĕk, Bĕ′liăl, Ebĕnē′zĕr, E′lī, El′kănâh or Elkā′năh, Hŏph′nī, Pĕnĭn′năh, Phĭn′ĕhăs, Rā′măh, Rāmăthā′ĭm, Shī′lōh.

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Expositor's Bible; Cambridge Bible; Pulpit Commentary; Commentaries by Cook, Keil and Delitzsch, Ellicott, Lange; *Polychrome Bible* on Samuel; *Notes on the Text of Samuel*, by Professor Driver; *From Samuel to Saul*, by Charles S. Robinson, LL.D.; *Expository Lectures*, "Samuel," by Professor Elmslie. Histories of the Israelites in the times of Samuel may be found in Professor Blaikie's *Manual of Bible History;* Geikie's *Hours with the Bible*, vol. III.; Stanley's *Jewish Church*, vol. I.; Milman's *History of the Jews*, vol. I. The times of Samuel may be seen in various aspects in Sime's *Kingdom of All Israel*, and Orelli's *Old Testament Prophecy*. On this lesson see also Bushnell's *Christian Nurture*.

The Historical Situation. — THE BOOK OF SAMUEL. The two books of Samuel were originally one, and with the books of the Kings were regarded as furnishing a complete history of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah. 1 Samuel is named in the title in our ordinary Bibles as "otherwise called, the First Book of the Kings"; the two books of Samuel and the two of Kings forming one volume of four books of the Kings.

NAME. These histories are named after Samuel because he was the leading man, the hero, who introduced the period of the Kings.

AUTHOR. It is generally agreed that the book is *a compilation* from different sources, including the writings of Samuel himself (1 Sam. 10: 25), the book of Nathan the prophet, and the book of Gad the seer (1 Chron. 29: 29; 2 Chron. 9: 29).

TIME. The *time* included in the history of these books cannot be exactly defined, from lack of any chronology in them. But it may be estimated roughly at one hundred and thirty years, B. C. 1145–1015. — *Cook*.

DATE. Samuel was born about 1146 B. C.; and the date of this lesson is therefore twelve years later, 1134 B. C. (The exact dates of this period are all of them somewhat uncertain.)

PLACE. Shiloh, the religious capital of Israel, seventeen miles north of Jerusalem, and half-way between Bethel and Shechem, nine or ten miles from each. — *Geikie*.

SAMUEL. 12 years old.

ELI. About 78 years old, high priest and judge.

JESSE, the grandson of Ruth, and father of King David, was born during the boyhood of Samuel.

CONTEMPORARY HISTORY. In the opinion of many, Samson was born very nearly at the same time with Samuel, and his judgeship was contemporary with Samuel's till about the time that Saul became a king, B. C. 1116–1096. "The capture of Troy by the Greeks, of which Homer sings, is said to have taken place about B. C. 1184" (Blaikie), and Eneas to have landed in Italy, married Lavinia, the daughter of the king, and founded the city of Lavinium, B. C. 1182, a few years before Samuel was born. Ascanius, his son, built Alba Longa, B. C. 1152. "Thus, while the house of Priam was approaching its downfall, through the lawlessness of Paris (in the abduction of Helen, a beautiful princess of Greece), that of Eli was hastening to its end through the profligacy of Hophni and Phinehas; and the aged king of Troy may have breathed his last amid the blazing ruins of his capital at the time when Eli was prostrated by the loss of the ark, and when the great judge Samson, whom a woman had betrayed and ruined, was performing his last achievement against the Philistines." — *Prof. W. G. Blaikie, LL.D.*

THE RELIGIOUS CONDITION UNDER ELI THE JUDGE. In order to understand the life and work of Samuel, and especially his boyhood as described in this lesson, it is necessary to realize the moral condition of the times.

1. It was toward the close of the long régime of the Judges, under the Theocracy, that is, a condition where God only is king; and while there were leaders and rulers there was no political unity except that of the laws and religion of God. There was little compulsory virtue. This was a state of things where true religious and moral life were especially needful for success.

2. Hence it was that punishment followed so quickly after a decline in religion and character. Probably at this time the nation was suffering under the forty years' oppression by the Philistines, in the time of Samson.

3. The ark, the tabernacle, and the central place of worship were at Shiloh, seventeen miles from Jerusalem. Hither the people came up to the great feasts, and at other times to worship and to sacrifice. In the reign of Saul the tabernacle was at Nob, near Jerusalem

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(compare 1 Sam. 21: 1 with Mark 2: 26), and during part of David's reign, at Gibeon, also near Jerusalem (Josephus), (1 Chron. 21: 29).

The tabernacle "was supplemented by a permanent structure or structures, such as would be needed for the accommodation of the priests and worshipers." — *Professor Beecher*. And this was "the temple" in which Samuel slept.

There was no doubt a good deal of true religion, as revealed in the story of Samuel's parents and the story of Ruth and of Eli. But the conduct of Eli's sons and of Samson shows great looseness of morals pervading the nation. We can realize the condition of morals a little more clearly when we think of the two seemingly contradictory reports which could be made, and are made, of the moral and religious condition of our own time and country.

At that time **the word of the Lord** (v. 1), the messages from God through a prophet, **was precious**, because very scarce. **There was no open vision** spoken to the people at large, but only personal, individual communion with God.

Eli, born about B. C. 1212, was high priest at Shiloh, became judge when 58 years old, acted as judge for forty years (1 Sam. 4: 18), and died at the age of 98 (1 Sam. 4: 15). He had been judge twenty years when God called Samuel, and was therefore 78 years old, which fact must be borne in mind in judging of his relation to the character of his sons. Eli had many good qualities. He was amiable and kind. "You cannot find one vulgar sin in the venerable high priest." "We find in Eli's treatment of Samuel not rivalry, but nobleness, magnanimity." "He was not self-obtrusive; he was no self-seeker." "Look at his interest in the ark of the Lord! Look at his submission to God!" — *From Parker's People's Bible*. Eli placed the honor of God and his kingdom beyond his own most precious interests, as is shown by his supreme care for the ark in the day of his calamity (1 Sam. 4: 13, 18). "The Bible holds him up as a great man of God."

At the same time, he had one grievous weakness which led him into great wrong to the nation and to his family. "When he got to be an old man, when his bodily strength was going, when his mental vigor and the energy of his will were sapped, then, under the terrible pressure of adverse circumstances," he failed in government.

"He grew far too amiable." He allowed his sons, the prospective high priests, to continue in their wilful and public transgressions. They were "sons of Belial"; *i. e.*, men of profligate disposition and conduct.

CHARACTER OF ELI'S SONS. The story of their crimes is told in 1 Sam. 2: 12–17, 29. They were covetous, impious, licentious, using their holy office for selfish purposes, robbing the worshipers, profaning the sanctuary, and bringing true religion into contempt with the people. This course they continued many years, in spite of the mild reproofs of their father and the warnings of God through Samuel and another man of God. They hardened their hearts against every good influence. Prov. 1: 24–32 is a life portrait of their character and career.

It was plainly their father's duty to turn them out of office at any and every cost. It was a terribly hard duty, and Eli failed in it. And bitter was his punishment. "It was his misfortune to reap the harvests of mischief that had been sown through the centuries."

At the same time let us not be unjust to Eli. Professor Elmslie says that "Eli is one of the most unfortunate men in the Bible. We constantly hear him described as a weak, worthless father, a mere worldling, with no heart or soul in him." "I think, if he could bring an action for libel against preachers and commentators, he would get enormous damages." "Was his tuition so bad and defective that his sons turned out ill? Who was it that trained the child Samuel, — the strong, powerful Samuel who crushed abuses and corruptions, drove out idolators, and won battles for Israel?" — *Elmslie*. Then, too, we must remember that the sons even of the great and noble Samuel did not turn out well, and the people were unwilling to have them for his successors (1 Sam. 8: 3–5).

GROWING BAD UNDER GOOD INFLUENCES. So long as there is a free will in man, so long will there be a possibility that the children of the best persons, under the best influences, may turn out to be bad; and the sons of the best business men to be failures in business, the sons of the wisest to become fools. Judas grew worse even under the teachings and example of Christ. Says Dr. Meredith, "Weak, indulgent, and neglectful fathers sow ruin for their children and sorrow for themselves. Eli's public position may have had much to do with his failure in family discipline. Perhaps his public duties so engrossed his attention and energies that he neglected the proper training of his own children. Be this as it may, it is true to-day that many a man is so absorbed in public affairs, in the duties of his profession, or in the business of money-making, as to be almost a stranger to his own children." At the same time it is true that the better the influences the more hope, and the better the persons may become.

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF A BOY INTO A GODLY MAN.

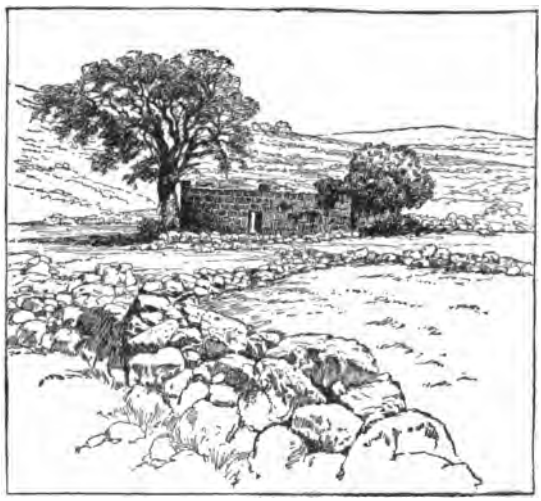
I. **Samuel.** — NAME. Samuel means "Asked of God"; and he was so named because his birth was in answer to his mother's prayer.

PARENTAGE. He was a Levite. His father's name was Elkanah, and his mother's, Hannah. Their story is beautifully told in 1 Sam. 1, 2.

BIRTH. Samuel was born about B. C. 1146, at Ramah (*Hill*) (called also Ramathaim, "the double hill," or "the two Ramahs"), situated about four miles northwest of Jerusalem and thirteen miles south of Shiloh. Probably Obed, the son of Ruth and grandfather of King David, "was a little boy when Samuel was a baby." — *Professor Beecher.*

HOME. His earliest years were spent with his mother at Ramah. As soon as he was weaned (probably when two or three years old), he was taken to the tabernacle at Shiloh, and placed under the care of the high priest Eli, where he had a room connected with the tabernacle court. For a long time he had his official residence here at Shiloh, then the religious capital of Israel; but his own home was at Ramah, where he married and had two sons.

II. **His Ancestral Inheritance.** — He was of the tribe of Levi, the religious and educational custodians of Israel. His parents were religious people, attending the great religious festivals. He was the child of many prayers. Hannah's song in 1 Sam. 2 gives us a good impression of her talent and spiritual power.



From a Photograph by Wilson.

Shiloh.

III. **His Home Influences.** — Samuel was reared in his early life in a religious home. He lived in an atmosphere of prayer. His parents went up to the religious meetings at Shiloh, and took him with them at a very early age. Such a home is a blessing to both parents and children. Like the quality of mercy "it is twice blessed; it blesseth him that gives, and him that takes." Next to heredity, the environment is of the utmost importance, and will often overcome many of the disadvantages of inherited tendencies. A true home — with pious parents, filled with love, deeply religious, cultured, with pure pleasures, with wise guidance and training, a center of usefulness — is the greatest safeguard against the perils of the young.

The homes of a country make it what it is. The center of power for building up a country in virtue, religion, and prosperity lies in the home. The battle of Science has for its central point, its Waterloo, the origin of life; the religious warfare centers around the Cross, the Alcyone of all religious forces; the moral battle is about the Home. Mrs. Hunt says that the Star of Bethlehem for temperance stands over the Schoolhouse. The Star of Bethlehem for morals and religion stands over the Home. The Home is the place nearest Paradise on earth, a hint of the Eden of the past, and a prophecy of Paradise regained.

IV. **His Dedication to God.** — He was dedicated to God from his birth, and he knew it. He lived under the Nazarite's vow (Num. 6: 1–12; 1 Sam. 1: 11).

ILLUSTRATION. The power of devoting our children in their earliest years to the service of God is well illustrated by the story told by Merivale, in his *History of Rome*, of the famous Carthaginian general, Hannibal. When he was nine years of age, his father Hamilcar proposed to take him on one of his military expeditions, which offer the young Hannibal eagerly accepted. His father then bade him devote himself once for all to the

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service of his country, — Carthage, — and with his hand upon the altar to swear eternal enmity to Rome. This dedication in youth determined the course of his whole life.

V. **Religious Influences.** — Next to his home he spent his youth in the temple service, with the good old high priest Eli. Even here his mother's love followed him, and by the clothes he wore he was ever reminded of his mother and his home.

VI. **Resisting Temptation.** — Samuel was trained by resisting great temptations. His goodness was not untried innocence, but was the fruit of victory in many a battle with temptation to sin. The active sons of Eli were ever setting him a bad example. They were like older brothers, and their position gave them a powerful influence for evil over the young boy in their father's service. He saw them committing loathsome abominations, yielding to vice, growing rich by extortion; and we may be sure that they did not let him alone. But he was uncontaminated, for "the child Samuel grew on, and was in favor both with the Lord and also with men" (1 Sam. 2: 26).

VII. **Three Phases of Religious Development.** — Dr. C. S. Robinson in writing upon Samuel says that "here are represented three phases of religious experience in children. A study of this story will show parents and teachers much which ought to be supremely helpful in their dealings with those young persons who come under their care. First, conscientious routine; then, awakened restlessness; and lastly, spiritual surrender to the full service of God." We will follow this arrangement.

FIRST PHASE. ROUTINE LABOR FAITHFULLY PERFORMED. **Samuel,** when he was 12 years old (Josephus' *Antiquities* 5: 10, 4), the age when Jesus first went up to the Temple at Jerusalem (Luke 2: 42), **ministered unto the Lord before Eli** (v. 1). "To minister" means *to serve;* a minister is a servant. Samuel performed various services in the house of worship, such as lighting the lamps (v. 3), opening the doors (v. 15), running of errands, and other duties required for the sacrifices and worship. He was also the personal attendant and aid to the aged and dim-sighted Eli, as is implied in his sleeping near him, and his readiness to respond to his call. So the young Mark and Timothy ministered unto Paul. While performing the temple service he wore a white linen ephod, after the pattern of the priest's dress in their public ministeries. It consisted of two pieces, which rested on the shoulders before and behind. They were joined at the top, and girded around the waist. This was worn over his ordinary dress, which was a coat or tunic, reaching down to his feet. This his mother made for him every year (1 Sam. 2: 18, 19). "It was Samuel's fidelity to duty, and his reverence for God's house and God's people, his care, his watchfulness, and his serious, sedate demeanor while about it, that made his work every day acceptable to Eli and to Jehovah, the great and holy God whom he ministered unto."

BLESSED BE DRUDGERY. This regular routine work of Samuel was a most important part of his education. In that charming book *Blessed Be Drudgery,* Mr. W. C. Gannett says, "I am going to speak of the *Culture that comes through this very Drudgery.*

"'Culture through my drudgery!' some one is now thinking: 'This treadmill that has worn me out, this grind I hate, this plod that, as long ago as I remember it, seemed tiresome, — to this have I owed "culture"? Beyond all books, beyond all class-work at the school, beyond all special opportunities of what I call my "education," it is this drill and pressure of my daily task that is my great schoolmaster. *My daily task,* whatever it be, *that is what mainly educates me.* All other culture is mere luxury compared with what that gives. That gives the indispensables. Yet, fool that I am, this pressure of my daily task is the very thing that I so growl at as my "drudgery"!'

"Our *prime* elements are due to our drudgery, — I mean that literally; the *fundamentals* that underlie all fineness, and without which no other culture worth the winning is even possible. These, for instance, — and what names are more familiar? Power of attention; power of industry; promptitude in beginning work; method and accuracy and despatch in doing work; perseverance; courage before difficulties; cheer under straining burdens; self-control and self-denial and temperance, — these are the prime qualities; these the fundamentals."

MODERN APPLICATION. "What is it possible for any child now to do, as a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, under the family rule? The very quietness of such a question shows how unnecessary it will be to try to give it an exhaustive answer. Young people can be taught to pray, to take the care of some practical schemes of usefulness, to study the Word of God diligently, to contribute money to religious causes, to become interested in the poor, to speak words of counsel and encouragement and warning to such as need direction or assistance. The grand old moralities are always within their reach; fidelities at school, courtesies to the aged, consideration for the weak, keeping the Sabbath, aiding in household cares, and full obedience to all God's commands." — *C. S. Robinson, LL.D.*

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6. And the LORD called yet again, Săm'u-el. And Săm'u-el arose and went to E'lī, and said, Here [am] I; for thou [didst call] me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again.

7. [a] Now Săm'u-el [1] did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him.

8. And the LORD called Săm'u-el again the third time. And he arose and went to E'lī, and said, Here [am] I; for thou [didst call] me. And E'lī perceived that the LORD had called the child.

9. Therefore E'lī said unto Săm'u-el, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Săm'u-el went and lay down in his place.

10. And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Săm'u-el, Săm'u-el. Then Săm'u-el [answered, said,] Speak; for thy servant heareth.

a Or, *Thus* did *Samuel before he knew the LORD, and before the word of the LORD was revealed unto him.*

[1] Acts 19: 2.

SECOND. THE CALL OF GOD AWAKENING HIS HIGHER NATURE (vs. 2–10). Eli lived in some of the buildings connected with the tabernacle, and Samuel slept not far away, ready for any call from Eli, who was old and partly blind. **The lamp of God** (v. 3) was probably the golden lamp before the holy of holies, which was lighted at sunset, and which burned till morning. One night, before this light had burned out, Samuel was awakened by a call. It could not be morning, for he could see the glimmer of the light. What could the matter be? He ran quickly to Eli, answering the call. "He thus showed considerateness and politeness. He would not keep Eli in doubt till he got there, but let him know at once that he had heard the call. The men whom God chooses to convey his great messages to men are ordinarily those who are thoughtful for the rights and the comfort of their fellows." — *Professor Beecher.* Eli replied that he had not called him, and sent him back to bed again.

6. The Lord called yet again. "Eli's sense of hearing, like his sense of sight, was failing, or else the voice was revealed to Samuel alone; either supposition will account for the fact that the high priest did not hear the call." — *Johnson.*

7. Samuel did not yet know the Lord. This explains why so great a prophet as Samuel became did not recognize the divine voice. This was his first experience, and he did not know what it meant.

FAILURES TO RECOGNIZE GOD'S CALL. "The witness of the Spirit in the hearts of the faithful is often thus mistaken, by which means they lose the comfort of it; and the strivings of the Spirit with the consciences of sinners are likewise often mistaken, and so the benefit of their convictions is lost: *God speaketh once, yea, twice,* but *man perceiveth it not* (Job 33: 14)." — *Henry.*

8. The third time. God kept repeating his call. For he knew it was not from unwillingness to hear and obey that Samuel did not answer him, but from inexperience. Indeed, Samuel's prompt obedience to Eli's supposed call was the assurance that he would answer God's call whenever he recognized it. Obedience to parents and teachers is one proof of obedience to God. **And Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child.** Because there was no other explanation of the repeated calls.

10. And the Lord came, and stood. The Hebrew is emphatic, "presented himself." In a vision, or in personal presence as the Angel of the Lord (compare Gen. 18: 17, 20, 21, 33; Judg. 6: 11–14; Rev. 1: 1; 22: 16).

GOD CALLING THE YOUNG. God is calling every child as he called Samuel. It is an individual call, by name, for "he calleth his own sheep by name." God calls (1) by his Word; (2) by his own loving, attractive character; (3) by what he has done for us in Jesus Christ; (4) by the influences of the Holy Spirit; (5) by various providences; (6) by conscience; (7) by Sabbath and religious services; (8) by the invitations and influence of friends; (9) by the living water which satisfies every thirst of the soul; (10) by the attractions of goodness and of heaven; (11) by warning, and the fruit of a life of sin.

EARLY PIETY. Like Samuel, we should answer God's calls by, "Here am I." (1) It is easier to be a Christian in youth. (2) Then it gives us a much longer time in which to

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11. And the LORD said to Săm'u-el, Behold, I will do a thing in Is'ra-el, [1] at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.

12. In that day I will perform against E'lī [2] all *things* which / *that* I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. / from the beginning even unto the end.

13. [a 3] For I have told him that I will [4] judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth; / knew, because [5] his sons made themselves vile, / did bring a curse upon themselves, and he [b 6] restrained them not.

14. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of E'lī, that the iniquity of E'lī's house [7] shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.

[1] 2 Kings 21: 12.
[2] 1 Sam. 2: 30–36.
[3] 1 Sam. 2: 29, 30.
[4] Ezek. 7: 3.
[5] 1 Sam. 2: 12, 17.
[6] 1 Sam. 2: 23.
[7] Num. 15: 30, 31; Isa. 22: 14.
a Or, *And I will tell him.*
b Hebrew, *frowned not upon them.*

serve God. (3) We may not live to be old, and thus by putting off our duty we may fail altogether. (4) We escape many evils and dangers. No one can sow wild oats in youth, and not reap a harvest of evil. There are some spiritual blessings which can come only to those who have grown up in the Christian life.

RELIGIOUS RESTLESSNESS OF THE YOUNG. There comes a time, usually not far from the age of Samuel at this time, when children are waking up to spiritual realities, when God's voice is speaking in their souls, and they do not at first recognize his voice. Nature stimulates the religious sentiments. Pres. Stanley Hall says, "The great instincts of altruism begin to be felt, and to transform the soul, and far off and dimly, at first, looms up the great conception that life is, after all, not to be lived for self, but for others." These are voices of God in the soul. The great majority of conversions occur in childhood and youth, "the best, the richest, and the largest period of human life. It has the most sympathies, most delusions, most capacities, most pleasures." See "The religious content of the child-mind" in *Principles of Religious Education* and Starbuck's *Psychology of Religion.*

THIRD. A NEW LIFE BEGUN. YIELDING ALL TO GOD (vs. 11–13). **11. And the Lord said to Samuel.** Through Samuel, whom Eli loved, God sent a terrible message, similar to one which he had previously sent by a holy man (1 Sam. 2: 27–36), but which did not have sufficient effect to enable Eli to compel his sons either to live a different life, or to leave the pure service of God. **At which both the ears . . . shall tingle** with horror and alarm. "As a loud, sharp, discordant note thrills one's ears with pain, so the bitter tidings of Israel's woe in the judgment about to fall on Eli's house would shock all Israel." — *Terry.*

12. All things which I have spoken. By the mouth of the man of God, as recorded in 1 Sam. 2: 27–36. **When I begin, I will also make an end.** I will perform thoroughly, I will go through with the performance from first to last. It was twenty years before God fulfilled his warning, thus giving abundant time in which both Eli and his sons might change their course and avert their punishment. Like all God's warnings, these were the messages of infinite love; they were barriers in their downward course; they were angels of mercy entreating them to turn back.

13. I will judge (condemn to punishment) **his house for ever.** See above under "Historical Situation." **He restrained them not,** and therefore he was in a measure responsible. He probably had not trained and disciplined his boys sufficiently when young. And now the wild and active young men were too strong and impetuous to be restrained by the infirm old man, without a faith and courage he did not then possess.

14. Shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever. Literally, *shall not cover itself;* shall not make atonement for itself. "The sons of Eli had sinned 'with a high hand' against light and warnings, and for such unrepentant, presumptuous offenders the law had no atonement. See Num. 15: 27–31." — *Cambridge Bible.* "The ordinary sins of the people were purged by the appointed sacrifices (Num. 15: 25; compare Heb. 7: 27; 9: 13, etc.). But the sin of the sons of Eli could not be so purged." — *Cook.*

Twenty years were given as space for repentance. But every effort to restrain these wicked sons of a good man proved unavailing. Then the doom came, sudden and irresistible. See 1 Sam. 4. The Philistines set themselves in battle array, and defeated the Israelites.

Then the people tried to regain their lost cause by resorting to the forms of religion

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without repentance and return in heart and life to God. They persuaded Eli's sons to bring the ark of God from Shiloh to the battlefield at Ebenezer, near Aphek, at the pass of Beth-horon, twenty miles southwest of Shiloh. Brave and desperate as the Israelites were, they were defeated with great slaughter. God would not defend the symbols of religion when the spirit of religion had departed. See Psa. 78: 56–64. Hophni and Phinehas, in care of the ark, were slain in connection with the holy service they had defiled. The news came to Eli as he watched by the gate for news of the battle; and when he learned that the ark of God was in the possession of the enemy, and that his sons had perished, he fell backward from his seat and was killed by the fall.

SAMUEL BEARS THE MESSAGE. It was a very hard thing for Samuel to make known to the aged Eli the message God had delivered to him. He was so young to seem to reprove one so old. He would have to give great pain to one who loved him and had done much for him. But Eli pressed and even abjured Samuel to tell him all, and Samuel "told him every whit."

VALUE OF HARD TASKS TO THE YOUNG. God often lays hard duties upon us at the very threshold of the new life. They are needful as a test, a revelation, and a defense; a test to God and man whether we really have given ourselves wholly to God; a revelation of our true condition to ourselves; and a defense against temptation. A French writer has said that a wise attack is the best defense. The same truth is expressed in the proverb about "carrying the war into Africa," derived from Scipio's defense of Rome against Hannibal by attacking Carthage. So now the best defense of the young against intemperance is to set them actively at work for temperance. The best defense against the temptations to any evil is to marshal them to an attack upon that evil. Hence God sets his children to work against evil; he gives them hard duties to perform, hard battles to fight. And this prepares them for their life's work.

LESSON XII. — December 21.

CHRISTMAS LESSON. — Luke 2 : 8–20.

Read Isa. 9: 1–7; Heb. 1.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*** — LUKE 2: 11.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Although this lesson is familiar to most people, yet the truth presented by it is so great, so essential, that it needs to be brought frequently before the mind.

And it can be presented in different ways, and in various aspects, with new illustrations and varied emphasis, so as to be ever fresh and new.

Read the whole section, including Luke 1–2: 20; Matt. 1–2: 12; John 1: 1–18, so the scholars may be familiar with the story and its meaning.

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Professor Ramsay, of Aberdeen University, has written a study on the credibility of the Gospel of St. Luke, entitled *Was Christ Born at Bethlehem?* (Putnams). G. D. Boardman's *The Divine Man* ($1.50, Appleton) is one of the very best helps on

LEARN BY HEART.

Matt. 2: 1, 2, 11; Luke 1: 78, 79; 2: 10–14; John 1: 1, 14, 16.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time. Jesus was born probably in December, B. C. 5, four years before our Christian era; for December 25, B. C. 5, is only one week short of January 1, B. C. 4.

Place. Bethlehem of Judea, a small town five or six miles south of Jerusalem. It now contains about five thousand inhabitants.

Rulers. Cesar Augustus was emperor of Rome; Herod the Great (the first of the seven Herods mentioned in the New Testament), king of Judea; but Palestine and most of the known world were subject to Augustus.

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this lesson. D. R. Breed's *Preparation of the World for Christ* ($2.00, Revell); Farrar's *The Herods* ($1.00, Herrick & Co.); Milton's *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*.

LESSON OUTLINE.

SUBJECT: The Glad Tidings of Salvation.

I. THE KIND OF SAVIOUR WE NEED.

II. IN WHAT WAYS JESUS MEETS THESE NEEDS.

1. The Son of God.
2. The Son made flesh.
3. Part of a great plan.

III. THE BIRTH OF JESUS.

IV. AN ANGEL ANNOUNCES THE GLAD TIDINGS (vs. 8–12).

V. THE ANGELS' CHORUS OF WELCOME (vs. 13, 14).

The Song, "Praise, Good will, Peace."

VI. THE SHEPHERDS LISTEN, SEEK, AND FIND (vs. 15–20).

VII. THREE PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

PICTURES.

There are many pictures on this lesson; photographs, and Wilde's Sunday-school pictures. Some of these are the *Madonna and Child*, especially the well-known *Madonna di San Sisto* and the *Madonna della Sedia*, Raphael; *The Annunciation to Mary*, Guido Reni, Seifert; *Holy Night*, Correggio; *The Nativity*, Murillo, Hofmann; *The Holy Family*, Raphael (Borghese Gallery, Rome), Murillo (Louvre); *The Appearance of the Angels to the Shepherds*, Plockhörst, and many other subjects.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY.

Subjects to be distributed the previous Sunday, for home study and class report and discussion.

The preparation of the world for Christ.
The pre-existence of Christ.
The human ancestry of Jesus.
The angel's song.
Good will to men.
Peace on earth.
What Jesus did for us by coming.

I. The Kind of Saviour we Need. — If we ask ourselves what we need in a real Saviour, we will find in the answer those things which all men need.

1. We need the forgiveness of sins, and the assurance from God as to the conditions on which they can be forgiven.

2. We need light upon the future, upon the certainty of a future life, upon heaven, its character, and the way to reach it.

3. We need a new heart, a disposition that loves what is right, to which goodness, purity, love, and all the virtues are natural.

4. We need every possible motive that can uplift and inspire us to live the right life, — hope, fear, love, duty, all in the strongest degree.

5. We need an example and guide, to show us by an actual life what our own possibilities are, and how we may reach them.

6. We need divine power, the Holy Spirit of God, as the wintry fields need the warm spring sun.

7. We need a divine Saviour, with all power to save, omnipresent, so far above us that we can always look up to him.

8. We need a human Saviour, who can sympathize with us, to whom we can draw near in personal love and friendship.



Courtyard of a Khan.

II. In what Ways Jesus meets these Needs. — FIRST. JESUS WAS THE SON OF GOD. We learn from John 1: 1–3 and Heb. 1: 2, 3

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that he was existent from eternity, that he "was with God, and was God," that he was "the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance." He who became Jesus on earth was the eternal Son of God. By him the worlds were created. He was with God, and was God. From his glorious home he came to this world, as the highest expression of God's love, to take upon himself our human nature for the salvation of the world from sin to holiness and heaven.

The divine nature of Christ is not a mere theory, far away from human life, but is a fact essential to one who would reveal God to men, and be the Saviour of men. He speaks to us from personal knowledge of God, of his love, his care, his readiness to forgive, his nearness to men, his fatherhood. He tells us about heaven and immortal life from his own experience. Only the Son of God could possibly make atonement for sin. Only he could have power to save us at all times and in all places, to be our ever-present friend, our perfect example, our infallible guide.

Whoever takes away the pre-existence and divinity of Christ takes away the largest part of the power of Jesus to redeem men, and clouds the stars of heaven that reveal to us the immortal life.

SECOND. JESUS WAS THE DIVINE INCARNATED IN THE HUMAN. Jesus was human, of course. If he were merely human, the fact of his humanity would give no special power to him, beyond that of many other men. But being the Son of God, the fact that he was also human is of the utmost importance and help to us. The human descent of Jesus is so important that two of the evangelists give his genealogy. He is the Son of man as well as the Son of God. The ancestry in Matthew points to his royal descent from David, fulfilling the prophecies of the ages. The ancestry in Luke traces his descent back to Adam, as the representative of the human race. "It is probable," says Professor Davis in his new *Dictionary of the Bible*, "that the table in Matthew gives the genealogy of Joseph, while the table in Luke gives the genealogy of Mary, and shows Jesus to be the actual son of David. With the clear declaration of Luke 1: 35 that Jesus had no human father," it would seem that this must be his meaning. He would not contradict himself. Some scholars read, "Jesus being the Son (as was supposed of Joseph) of Heli," the change being simply in the place of the parenthesis. That is, "Jesus, according to Luke, is the grandson of Heli, Mary's father, and thus a lineal descendant of David."

PRACTICAL. Note that in this ancestry are people of all kinds, good and bad, men and women, of different races and ages. Jesus has inherited every phase of human nature. He is "heir of all the ages," the brother of every man.

ILLUSTRATION. Pres. Stanley Hall said not long ago, that counting two parents, four grandparents, etc., if he went back only as far as William the Conqueror, he would inherit from twenty million ancestors. It is for each one to decide which of these many inheritances he will follow and utilize in his life.

In the previous chapter we are told of the miraculous conception of the Virgin Mary, the Holy Ghost being the father of Jesus. Note the *Magnificat*, the hymn of Mary, and the *Benedictus*, the hymn of Zacharias, the father of John. The titles come from the first words of the hymns in the Latin version.

THIRD. HIS MISSION IS PART OF A GREAT PLAN. One of the strongest assurances that Jesus is the true Saviour from heaven is the fact that he comes as part of a great divine plan. He was foretold, promised, typified from the very beginning. There was a promise to Adam (Gen. 3: 15); to Abraham (Gen. 22: 18); to Jacob (Gen. 28: 14); to David (2 Sam. 7: 12–16); by Isaiah (9: 6, 7; 11: 1–9); by Daniel (9: 24). The sacrifices typified him. More frequently still were foretold the blessed times he would bring.

III. **The Birth of Jesus.** — Jesus was born in the stable of an inn, or khan, at Bethlehem.

1. There was something specially fitting in Bethlehem as his birthplace, because it was the city of David, his royal ancestor.

2. This was in accordance with prophecy (Mic. 5: 2).

3. Note the divine providence in thus guiding Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem at this time by a decree beyond their control, and without human planning.

4. Jesus came to earth in the circumstances best fitting him to be the Saviour of man. He began his life in a humble way and was brought up in humble life and honest toil, that he might be the friend of all men, but especially of the poor and suffering.

5. If he was born in December, as is probable, the time was symbolical, since the twenty-fifth of December comes when the longest night of the year gives way, and the days begin to lengthen.

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8. And there were [in the same country shepherds / shepherds in the same country] abiding in the field, and keeping [a] watch [over their flock by night. / by night over their flock.]

9. And [lo, the / an] angel of the Lord [came upon / stood by] them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: [1] and they were sore afraid.

10. And the angel said unto them, [Fear not: / Be not afraid;] for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy [2] which shall be to all [the] people:

11. [3] [For unto you is born / for there is born to you] this day in the city of Dā'vid [4] a Saviour, [5] which is Chrīst the Lord.

12. And this [shall be a / is the] sign unto you; Ye shall find [the / a] babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger.

13. [6] And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

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[1] Luke 1: 12.
[2] Vs. 31, 32; Matt. 28: 19; Mark. 1: 15; Luke 24: 47.
[3] Isa. 9: 6.
[4] Matt. 1: 21.
[5] Matt. 1: 16; Luke 1: 43.
[6] Gen. 28: 12; Psa. 103: 20, 21.
a Or, *the night watches.*

IV. **An Angel announces the Glad Tidings.** — Vs. 8–12. **8. Shepherds abiding in the field.** Near Bethlehem. "It was in these pastures that David spent his youth and fought the lion and the bear" (1 Sam. 17: 34, 35). — *Int. Crit. Com.* **Keeping watch over their flock by night.** "Thieves, wild beasts, and the dangers of the rough precipices form the chief reasons for a night-watch over the flock." — *Prof. Isaac Hall.* There are no detached farmhouses in Palestine, as with us, but the farmers live in villages, and hence would have to abide in the fields to watch their flocks. In December in Palestine, says Schaff, the fields are often clothed with rich verdure.

9. And, lo, the angel (not *the*, but "an" angel) **of the Lord** (one sent from heaven) **came upon them.** Rather, as R. V., "stood by them." **And the glory of the Lord.** The radiant brightness which in all ages has been the best symbol and manifestation of God's nature, expressing wisdom, love, power, purity, mystery, eternity, omnipresence. "The light that never was on sea or land." This accompanied the angel, and showed him to be the authorized divine messenger. **And they were sore afraid.** Literally, *feared a great fear.* "The universal consciousness of sin and of unfitness for the eternal world makes all mankind afraid of any unexpected disclosure of the spiritual world or revelation of the nearness of God." — *Abbott.* Any sudden manifestation of a great but unknown power produces this effect.

10. Good tidings. The word from which our word "gospel" comes. They announced the best news the world had ever heard, the news of the Saviour who would fill the whole world with heavenly glory, like that then shining on the field of Bethlehem. **To all people.** To all ages, all nations, all classes, all colors. The gospel is the universal religion, as broad as the human race; and the joy is more intense to each one because it is for all.

11. For unto you is born . . . a Saviour. One who should save them from their sins, their worst and most dangerous enemies. "Jesus" means *Saviour.* **Christ.** The Anointed One, the Messiah, whom they had long been hoping and praying for. He is called "Anointed" because he had been divinely set apart for this work, as kings and high priests were set apart by anointing with oil. **The Lord.** The King of kings and the Lord of lords.

12. And this shall be a sign unto you, that the words spoken were true; and a guiding sign, like the sign to the wise men, showing how they might know what child was the one referred to.

V. **The Angel Chorus of Welcome.** — Vs. 13, 14. **13. And suddenly,** as when the eyes of Elisha's servant were opened to see the mountains around him filled with angelic chariots and horses of fire. **A multitude of the heavenly host.** The angelic choirs, the cherubim and seraphim, who knew most about the value of the salvation brought to men. All heaven was moved with joy. If there was joy among the angels over one sinner that repented (Luke 15: 7, 10), how much more over the coming into the world of one who was to save countless hosts, to redeem a whole world!

COMPARE the angel faces filling the whole space around the *Madonna di San Sisto*, "and melting away in an abyss of golden glory," in Raphael's famous picture, and the

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14. [1] Glory to God in the highest, and on earth [2] peace, good will toward men. among men in whom he is well pleased.

15. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

[1] Luke 19: 38; Eph. 1: 6. [2] Isa. 57: 19; Luke 1: 79; Rom. 5: 1. [3] John 3: 16; Eph. 2: 4, 7.

glory of angels surrounding the figure of Christ in *The Enthroned Madonna* by Ambrogio Borgognone. See Mrs. Jameson's *Sacred and Legendary Art*, pp. 49, 50.

The song of the angels, the *Gloria in Excelsis*, consists of two strains of three members each.

1. GLORY . . . . . TO GOD . . . IN THE HIGHEST.
2. PEACE, GOOD WILL . TO MEN . . . ON EARTH.

14. Glory to God. For the coming of Jesus was the highest expression of God's glory, the fulness of his nature, his love, his goodness, which passed before Moses when he asked to see God's glory. The phrase expresses both the fact and the desire that all should recognize God's glory.

FIRST STRAIN. **In the highest.** (1) *In the highest strains.* Only the most exquisite music and song are worthy to express this theme. (2) *In the highest heavens.* The glory shines and the praise sounds to the highest heavens. It is the noblest song and the brightest glory even there. (3) *In the highest degree.* The plan of salvation through Jesus Christ, so infinitely wise, so infinitely loving, manifests God's glory more than all the wonders of creation, "when all the sons of God shouted for joy." For the souls of the saved shall "shine as the brightness of the firmament and as the stars for ever and ever"; even when the stars are faded, and the heavens shall be no more.

SECOND STRAIN. **And on earth peace.** Including all welfare and prosperity and blessing. That which belongs to heaven, which makes heaven what it is, all conceivable good to body and to soul, is coming to earth through Jesus Christ, and has come in no small degree. Where Christ is most perfectly received, there already is the most of heavenly peace. This strain accords with the first clause of the Lord's Prayer.

ILLUSTRATION. PEACE. Toward the close of the War of 1812 the country was shrouded in deep gloom; the harbors were blockaded, commerce destroyed, products moldering in the warehouses, the currency depreciated. In February a ship drew near to New York, bringing the commissioners from Ghent, and the news that the treaty of peace was signed. Men rushed breathless to the city shouting, "Peace, peace!" From house to house, from street to street, amid waving torches, all went shouting, "Peace, peace!" More joyful is the news of peace brought from God by the angels. We, too, should not keep silence, but repeat the news of peace till all the world shall hear.

Good will toward men. Jesus expresses God's feelings toward men. He does not hate them for their sins; he is not repelled by their abominations so repulsive to his nature; but he loves them in spite of all, and does all that divine love and wisdom and power can do to save them from sin and its consequences. These are the glad tidings which comfort and draw us and save us who are conscious of our sins, who know that punishment follows sin by a divine law. What the world needed to know was that God had good will toward *all* men; that the holy God loved this sinful, rebellious, unworthy world, lying in darkness and the shadow of death; that the Father loved his wandering, prodigal children, all defiled with sin. To bring this message, to publish the glad tidings that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life," this was worthy of the whole host of angel messengers to bring to man.

> And this is the marvel to mortals revealed,
> When the silvery trumpets of Christmas have pealed,
> That mankind are the children of God.
>
> — *Brooks.*

VI. **The Shepherds Listen, Seek, and Find.** — Vs. 15–20. **15. Let us now go.** At once, without delay. So should we ever seek the Saviour. The shepherds had so much faith in the angel's message that they proceeded to investigate and see for themselves.

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16. And they came with haste, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

17. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad concerning the saying which was told to them concerning this child.

18. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told unto them by the shepherds.

19. [1] But Mā'ry kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

20. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, even as it was told unto them.

[1] V. 51; Gen. 37: 11; Luke 1: 66.

16. They came with haste. Showing their zeal and ardor, as well as faith. We can never find the Saviour too soon. **And found** everything just as the angels had told them; and they then knew that the angel's message was true.

SPREADING THE GOOD NEWS. **17. They made known abroad.** Whosoever has truly found the Saviour burns to "proclaim to all around what a Saviour they have found." See Acts 4: 20; 1 John 1: 1, 2.

18. All they that heard it wondered. It was indeed marvelous news, so good that many find it hard to believe that it is true.

KEEPING THE TRUTH IN THE HEART. **19. But Mary,** in contrast with the others, **kept all these things** in her memory. They were treasures whose value the following years revealed to her. **Pondered them.** Kept revolving them, comparing them with the promises of the Old Testament, and what had been announced to her. "Contrast, however, the difference in the reception by the shepherds and by Mary: the one publishes, the other meditates. Both are right: they illustrate different but not inconsistent phases of experience. Pondering and publishing are both Christian duties." — *Abbott.*

20. The shepherds returned. To their duty as shepherds, but with a new life and blessing in all their daily work. Feeding sheep could never again be commonplace toil to them. After our holiest communion with God, our views from the Pisgahs of life, our insight into the word and heaven on the mounts of transfiguration, we must return to our daily duties, but with a new life in them, a new blessing on them. **Glorifying** expresses the feeling of the *greatness* of the work. **Praising** refers to the *goodness* displayed in it.

VII. **Practical Suggestions.** — 1. Jesus Christ is the perfect Saviour of men; nothing better is conceivable as to his nature, divine and human, as to the fitness of the time of his coming, as to the circumstances of his introduction into the world, a child among common people, heralded by angels, sought by shepherds and by wise men.

2. The coming of Jesus is the living, invincible proof to us that there is a personal God, that he is our Father, that he loves us in spite of our sins, that he cares for us, that all that infinite love and wisdom and power can do will be exerted for our redemption from sin into the kingdom of heaven.

3. Note what it means to us that the Son of God came into this world a little child.

It shows that Jesus is close to us in feeling and experience. He has had the whole range of human life in his life. Nothing that belongs to man is foreign to him.

It shows him to be the children's Saviour.

It has sanctified childhood and motherhood and the home, giving them a new meaning and power, and has shown the importance of childhood in the training of the human race.

It has revealed and emphasized the infinite possibilities in the child. "Here is present," says Dr. Guthrie, "not only the immortal, but the eternal." "What deep secrets of divine wisdom, power, and love lie here wrapped in these poor swaddling clothes!" "It is curious to pause over any cradle . . . to think of the mighty powers and passions that are slumbering there; to think that this feeble nursling has heaven or hell before it."

"Yet sure the babe is in the cradle blest,
Since God himself a baby deigned to be,
And slept upon a mortal mother's breast,
And steeped in baby tears his deity."

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LESSON XIII. — December 28.

REVIEW.

Scripture. — The Golden Texts for the Quarter.

GOLDEN TEXT. — ***Lord, thou hast been our dwellingplace in all generations.***
PSA. 90: 1.

FIRST REVIEW.

THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE HEBREW NATION.

The Founder, ABRAHAM, about B. C. 2000.
The Family, THE PATRIARCHS.
The Egyptian Experience.
The Exodus, B. C. 1491.
The Wilderness Discipline.
The Conquest of the Promised Land, 1451.
The Rule of the Judges, B. C. 1427–1094.

TIME. About 900 years, from B. C. 2000–1100.
COUNTRIES. Chaldea, Palestine, Egypt, Arabia.
LESSONS. 1. God is preparing a people, not for themselves alone, but as a means, making the whole world to be his kingdom.
2. The progress is slow, difficult, variable, but on the whole a steady growth.
3. There is seen to be a great variety of influences, — punishments, glorious works, manifestations of love, hard battles, great victories, revelations of God and his will, rewards of faithfulness, long discipline.

SECOND REVIEW.

THE DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH OF THE NATION DURING THREE CENTURIES.

TIME. From B. C. 1451–
PLACE. Palestine.
PERSONS. Give a character sketch of the leading persons, and the part they took in making the nation.

Joshua. Naomi.
Caleb. Ruth.
Rahab. Orpah.
Achan. Eli.
Gideon. Samuel.

EVENTS. Appearance of the captain of the Lord's host.
Arousing courage for a great work.
Crossing the Jordan. A divine wonder.
Capture of Jericho. A miracle and a sign.
Defeat on account of Achan's sin.
Reward of faithfulness, though long deferred.
Cities of refuge.
Good advice from an aged man. The past teaching the future.
The Times. Mingled good and evil. The sins and crimes, disobedience, idolatry, unfaithfulness, wars and devastations on the one hand; and on the other the heroisms, the penitence, the long periods of prosperity, such glimpses of the inner life of the people as are furnished by Deborah, Ruth, Hannah, Boaz, Eli, Samuel.
The victory of Gideon and his three hundred.
The character of Eli and his sons.
The call of Samuel.

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THIRD REVIEW.

AN ANCIENT PILGRIM'S PROGRESS.

From the Bondage of Sin and Ignorance, on the Way toward a Perfect Life and a Perfect World.

1. The Egyptian bondage represents the bondage of sin and ignorance.
2. The Exodus represents the new start in life.
3. The Wilderness Discipline:

A leader.	Living water.
Manna or food from heaven.	Grapes of Eshcol.
The pillar of cloud and fire, guidance by the Spirit and the Word.	Falling into sin.
The tabernacle, religious services.	Sufferings, labors, trials, victories, helps, delays, dying out of the old, and growth of the newer life.
Feasts.	

4. Taking possession of our Promised Land. The new life fully entered upon.
5. The Promised Land held by enemies, beset with temptations.
6. The captain of the Lord's host.
7. Miracles of grace, heavenly helps (crossing the Jordan, the fall of Jericho).
8. Some of the fruits of the land, foretastes of the perfected life.
9. Renewing the covenant.
10. Cities of refuge, helps for the slips and failures and imperfections of our daily lives.
11. The Judges, the great struggle of life.
12. Periods of rest, prosperity, growth; the peaceful tenor of daily life.
13. The call of God, to a consecrated life for the service of God and man.

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DIRECTIONS. — Put in a simple line | for absence, and a + for tardiness. If desired, the amount of contribution can be put in, which will of itself prove "presence."

Class ..... *of the* ..... *Sunday School.*

Teacher, ...

Number.	Address.	Name.	January.				February.				March.					April.				May.				June.				
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CLASS RECORD.

NOTE. — Whatever it is desired to emphasize and impress, keep an account thereof. If you would have your scholars bring a contribution every Sabbath, then call their attention to it by marking their contributions. If you specially desire them to study their lessons at home, then mark that fact in their presence.

NUMBER.	ADDRESS.	NAME.	JULY.				AUGUST.					SEPTEMBER.				OCTOBER.				NOVEMBER.					DECEMBER.			
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